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General Assembly
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Official Records

84th plenary meeting
Friday, 17 December 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Morel (Seychelles), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 20 and 50 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(f) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Draft resolution (A/54/L.58)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/671)

The Acting President: We will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/54/L.58.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/54/671.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/54/L.58, the following countries have become sponsors: Argentina, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Madagascar, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Samoa, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.58?

Draft resolution A/54/L.58 was adopted (resolution 54/189).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 50.

Agenda item 24 *(continued)*

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Draft resolution (A/54/L.47/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this item at its 72nd plenary meeting on 7 December 1999.

00-27742 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/54/L.47/Rev.1.

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): On behalf of the sponsors and as agreed during informal consultations on document A/54/L.47/Rev.1, I would like to make the following oral correction: the fourth preambular paragraph should follow the fifth preambular paragraph, in order to have a consistent chronological order of all relevant conventions mentioned in the text.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.47/Rev.1, as orally corrected.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Burundi, Colombia, Croatia, Romania and Ukraine.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.47/Rev.1, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/54/L.47/Rev.1, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 54/190).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Algeria, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Sai (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like to make one correction: Algeria has withdrawn from the list of sponsors of this draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Secretariat takes note of that fact.

I call on the representative of Greece.

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): On behalf of my Government, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to all Member States for the valuable support rendered to the resolution just adopted. Their constructive participation during informal consultations on the draft text made possible its adoption today by consensus for the first time since the introduction of this agenda item in 1973.

Cooperation between Member States, transparency of information and open exchanges of views between parties concerned are indeed instrumental in achieving mutually acceptable solutions to the issue of return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin.

I would like once more to express
the sponsors of this resolution and ask M
pursue further their efforts, especiall
relevant committees of the United Natio
Scientific and Cultural Organization, t
resolution's implementation.

The Acting President: May I take
wish of the Assembly to conclude its c
agenda item 24?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 35 *(continued)*

Assistance in mine action

Draft resolution (A/54/L.71)

The Acting President: Members wil
General Assembly held a debate on this i
plenary meeting, on 19 November 1999.

I now give the floor to the representa
to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.71.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): I have th
introduce, on behalf of the European Uni
other sponsors, the draft resolution on assi
action, contained in document A/54/L.
publication of this draft resolution, entitle
in mine action", the following countries
sponsors: Angola, Colombia, Malta, Moza
Leone, South Africa and Thailand.

In order to make the text consistent w
finalized in negotiations and submitted to t
let me make the following oral corrections

First, in the first preambular paragrap
the resolutions should be cited. After "
1997", the words "on assistance in mi
should be added; and also after "17 Nov
the words "on assistance in mine actio
added.

Secondly, in the sixth line of the ten
paragraph, the word "and" should the ad
comma. In the last line, the word "for" sh
after the word "and".

Thirdly, in operative paragraph 2, line 4, the word "and" should be added after the comma, and the word "those" should be replaced by "these".

Fourthly, at the end of operative paragraph 9, the following words should be added: "in annex II to his report on this agenda item in 1998".

Fifthly, in operative paragraph 19, line 4, the words "progress made" should be deleted.

The agenda item "Assistance in mine action" puts before us an area of tremendous humanitarian suffering. Almost one third of the world's nations are, to some extent, contaminated by millions of anti-personnel landmines and pieces of unexploded ordnance. The purpose of this draft resolution is to help reduce the number of mine victims by enhancing international cooperation in humanitarian mine action. It is aimed at supporting and making easier the work of the United Nations and all other actors involved in mine action in the field, be it in mine clearance, victim assistance, mine awareness or other mine action activities. The draft resolution again emphasizes the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine action activities, as well as the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system. It encourages the Secretary-General to further develop a comprehensive mine action strategy and emphasizes the importance of developing a comprehensive information management system for mine action.

There have been important developments in the field of mine action in 1999, many of which are reflected in the draft resolution. The draft notes the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention in May 1999, in Maputo, at which measures were taken, among other things, to provide assistance for mine clearance, rehabilitation, the social and economic reintegration of mine victims and mine-awareness programmes.

The draft resolution welcomes the mine action coordination centres already established under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as the creation of international trust funds for mine clearance and mine assistance. It further welcomes the initiation of the revision of international mine-clearance standards and the development of guidelines for the use of mine-detection dogs and mechanical mine-clearance equipment. Much emphasis is placed in the draft resolution on victim assistance, as well as on the need for age- and gender-appropriate mine-awareness programmes and child-related rehabilitation.

The negotiations on this draft resolution were lengthy, and we hope that the result will lead to further enhancement of international cooperation in the field of mine action. I would like to express our gratitude to all the delegations that gave their support during the negotiations and our hope that this important draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I would like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/54/L.71 Senegal has become a sponsor.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.71, as orally corrected.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.71, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/54/L.71, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 54/191).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Finland speaking on a point of order.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): There seems to be some confusion regarding the sponsors of resolution 54/191, which has just been adopted.

May I inform the Assembly that Andorra had also signed on as a sponsor on time. Andorra should therefore be added as a sponsor of this resolution.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 62

Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte

The Acting President: It is my understanding that, after the necessary consultations, consideration of this item may be deferred to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and

to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 62.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution (A/54/L.70)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/54/L.72/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Cameroon to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Some days ago I drew the attention of the international community to the need for emergency assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to Djibouti and to Somalia. Today I have the honour to call for continued assistance to the Sudan. In that connection, I wish on behalf of the Group of African States to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Sudan", under agenda item 20 (b).

Above and beyond its humanitarian assistance to the Sudan through Operation Lifeline Sudan, we urge the international community to continue its much-appreciated active participation in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Sudan. The draft resolution has been the subject of intensive consultations and has won the agreement of the donor community, represented by the European Union, by China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Japan, Norway and the United States, and by the International Committee of the Red Cross. On behalf of the African Group, I wish to extend to them and to all other participants in the consultations our thanks for their positive contribution and for their greatly appreciated assistance to the Sudan.

The draft resolution is very similar to resolution 53/1 O of 17 December 1998; in a sense, it is an updated and extended version of that resolution. It expresses the Assembly's appreciation to the donor community, United Nations agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations for their multifaceted contributions, and acknowledges with appreciation the cooperation by the Government of the Sudan with the United Nations in getting supplies to affected areas.

It stresses the need for Operation Lifeline Sudan to be operated and managed effectively with a view to ensuring its transparency, with the full involvement and cooperation of the Government of the Sudan, and in adherence to the principles of neutrality and impartiality and within the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sudan.

It calls upon all donors and upon the international community at large to increase their multifaceted assistance, because of the Sudan's enormous needs in the areas of health care, social and communication infrastructures, in fighting epidemics, and in terms of support for programmes for the rehabilitation of infrastructure and for the reintegration of populations.

It stresses the imperative of ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and the need for all parties to continue to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations in order fully to demonstrate the international community's solidarity with the people of Sudan.

Finally, it expresses the wish to see the humanitarian tragedy of the Sudanese people end as soon as possible. It therefore calls for an early resolution to the conflict in the Sudan and commends the work of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the initiative of Egypt and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in this connection.

That is the basic structure of the draft resolution now before the General Assembly. As I said earlier, there have been intensive consultations on this draft resolution, with the active participation of the donor community.

It is our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, which would have a positive impact on the conduct of international humanitarian operations in the Sudan and on the efforts of all parties to settle the conflict swiftly and peacefully. Above all, however, United Nations personnel in the Sudan would be encouraged by this support from the international community.

The Acting President: I wish to announce that the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.70: Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Thailand and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

India has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.70, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel", as orally revised in the course of the 80th plenary meeting.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin Yongjian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): As members are aware, paragraph 14 of draft resolution A/54/L.70 reads as follows:

> "Recognizes the need to strengthen the Office of United Nations Security Coordinator and the need for a full time Security Coordinator to enable the Office to enhance its capacity in the discharge of its duties, in consultation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and appropriate agencies within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee".

That paragraph, as it stands, does not give rise to programme budget implications at this stage. The Secretary-General will review the United Nations security arrangements and will report to the General Assembly as appropriate.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.70, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/54/L.70, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 54/192).

The Acting President: Under sub-item (b) of agenda item 20, the General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Sudan".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 54/96 J).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Savage (United States of America): Today, the United States joined consensus on the humanitarian assistance resolution on Sudan.

We joined consensus despite the resolution's serious shortcomings and inaccuracies. While we agree with the importance of supporting a robust, United Nations-led humanitarian effort in the Sudan, we regret that this year's resolution did not accurately reflect the true situation facing both the victims of war and the providers of life-saving relief.

Since 1983, the civil war in the Sudan is estimated to have caused the deaths of some 2 million persons and the displacement of 4 million more. There are, in addition, some 400,000 persons languishing in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. This year's humanitarian resolution does not even begin to describe the situation facing the southern Sudanese. The resolution does not describe the Government's periodic imposition of relief-flight bans to areas affected by large-scale population displacements. In the past three months, the oil fields of western Upper Nile, in particular, have been subject to ethnic cleansing, leaving thousands displaced. At the same time, flight bans by the Government on United Nations operations have denied critical relief to the thousands who have lost their homes. It is for this reason that we support humanitarian relief operations outside the United Nations umbrella.

The resolution also fails to describe the Government of Sudan's continued aerial bombardment of civilian population centres and humanitarian relief operations, including the bombing of clearly marked hospitals and schools. Such attacks transgress international humanitarian law. The resolution does not mention the horrible practice of slavery, supported by Government-funded militias, that continues along the border areas between North and South Sudan, as described by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for human rights in

the Sudan. While we recognize that opposition forces have also been accused of diverting relief supplies and impeding the efforts of humanitarian workers, the main impediment to effective relief operations has been the Sudanese Government.

The United States is committed to a single, unified peace process under the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. The United States firmly supports the United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan in its mission to alleviate suffering in the Sudan. The United States has consistently been the largest donor to the Sudanese relief effort. In 1999, the United States committed over $95 million to assistance programmes in the Sudan in both Government- and rebel-controlled areas. We have contributed nearly $1 billion in relief to the Sudan since the establishment of Operation Lifeline Sudan in 1989.

Despite multiple peace initiatives over the years, it appears that we are still far from a lasting and just peace in the Sudan. Although humanitarian conditions and food security appear to be improving in many areas, the situation remains vulnerable. With the continual cycle of war, drought and famine ever present in the Sudan, the international community must stay vigilant. This is not the time for the international community to reduce its support for assistance programmes in the Sudan, nor is it the time for us to lessen our resolve to end this terrible war.

Mr. Von Kaufmann (Canada): Canada joined consensus on resolution 54/96 J on emergency assistance to the Sudan. We did so to show Canada's continuing support for humanitarian assistance for the people of the Sudan.

However, we continue to have reservations about some of the language contained in the text and its potential effects on a coordinated international effort to effectively deliver humanitarian assistance to all affected populations in the Sudan. Unfortunately, not all of these concerns were taken into account. This has resulted in a resolution that contains unbalanced elements.

Despite an ongoing peace process, violations of humanitarian and human rights law continue to be perpetrated by both sides to this conflict, with especially negative effects on the civilian population. To date, the United Nations has noted that nearly 2 million people have been killed since 1983 and that in excess of 4 million remain internally displaced. We therefore call on all parties to respect their obligations under international law. Moreover, as we have noted previously, the humanitarian situation in the Sudan has not sufficiently changed to merit the decision to biennialize this resolution, a move which we oppose.

Canada vigorously supports the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace process, including the 1994 Declaration of Principles. Both the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) have accepted the Declaration of Principles as the basis for negotiations. Canada commends the decisions taken in July 1999 by the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM to recommit themselves to the IGAD peace process, including their support for the establishment of a talk secretariat and the appointment of a special envoy to facilitate the peace process and allow continuous negotiation between the parties.

Canada urges the parties to establish a general and comprehensive ceasefire with an effective monitoring mechanism as part of the negotiated solution to the conflict and in accordance with the Declaration of Principles. In the interim, we welcome the recent decision by the Government of the Sudan to extend for a further period of three months the ceasefire for all the areas of military operation and the announcement by the SPLM to extend the humanitarian ceasefire within the same period for Bahr al Ghazal and parts of the Upper Nile. Canada welcomes the signing by the Government of the Sudan of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and encourages its early ratification.

We continue to be concerned by the difficulty of ensuring full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian workers to all affected populations. Canada deplores the killing of humanitarian workers in the Sudan earlier this year, which underlines the need to ensure the protection of United Nations and other international and national personnel. The Government of Canada also emphasizes the importance of ensuring humanitarian access and, in this context, acknowledges the decision taken by the Government of the Sudan to permit United Nations access to the Nuba Mountains. This must be accompanied by ongoing humanitarian access to the Nuba people. Furthermore, Canada urges all parties to refrain from imposing restrictive measures, including flight bans, which hinder the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide needed assistance.

We continue to be concerned by references in the resolution that interfere with the management of Operation Lifeline Sudan and with independent humanitarian assistance activities that are not part of the operation. As Operation Lifeline Sudan constitutes the basic framework for assistance to the Sudan, it is therefore paramount that all parties in the Sudan operate in accordance with the 1994 tripartite Agreement and that the principles and guidelines of Operation Lifeline Sudan, as well as the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182, are duly respected by all to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the operation.

As in the past, Canada will continue to fully support the humanitarian work of Operation Lifeline Sudan to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations and to support the IGAD secretariat in the peace process.

Recognizing that there can be no military solution to Sudan's problems, Canada encourages a negotiated and just resolution to the civil conflict as the only sustainable means of bringing peace, security and well-being to the Sudanese people.

Mr. Rahmtalla (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Sudan has requested the floor in order to express its gratitude to all our partners from the donor community that agreed to support this resolution by consensus on the basis of its humanitarian nature. We thank them and appreciate their cooperation in achieving consensus on the resolution just adopted.

I do not wish to speak at length, but let me state that the accusations we have heard today have been made previously in different contexts and in other forums, and were answered then, and that they were motivated by political considerations. We do not wish to consider these political motives in detail.

The Government of Sudan is a party to Operation Lifeline, and, as is well known, to the tripartite Agreement between the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations and the rebel movement. That operation is considered to be a model one and has never before been undertaken by any Government. This is the first time that the Government of the Sudan has agreed that humanitarian relief assistance would be provided to the rebel movement that is taking up arms against the Government. Violations committed by that rebel movement in the southern Sudan are described in great detail in the report of the Secretary-General submitted under this item.

I should like to urge those representatives who spoke in explanation of vote today to re-read the report of the Secretary-General, which outlines in detail the breaches committed by the rebel movement in Sudan. That is all I have to say at this point.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 48

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/625)

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/54/629)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.36)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/665)

The Acting President: The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/54/L.36 is contained in document A/54/665.

I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Lucia to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.36.

Mr. Hunte (Saint Lucia): In my capacity as current Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the month of December, I have the honour to submit to the General Assembly, on behalf of the Group, the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.36, relative to the creation of an international civilian mission for support in Haiti in the framework of agenda item 48, entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

Allow me therefore in this regard to stress to this body that in addition to the 33 members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the following countries have also sponsored the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The International Civilian Mission, deployed in Haiti since February 1993 by decision of the General Assembly in the context of the military coup of 1991 and its brutal and systematic violations of human rights, will soon reach the termination of its mandate on 31 December 1999. With the evolving responsibilities brought about by the changing realities of the situation on the ground, it has been widely acknowledged that the International Civilian Mission has decisively contributed to a qualitative change in the human rights situation, to the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and to the professionalization of the security forces in Haiti.

In spite of the remarkable progress achieved by the Haitian national institutions in the field of human rights, there is still considerable need for continued international support in that regard, particularly as concerns the shortcomings and weaknesses of the judicial system and their negative impact on a national police that is not sufficiently equipped in techniques and resources and which has not yet reached institutional maturity. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Executive Director, Colin Granderson, and his staff for their commitment in the accomplishment of the Mission's mandate over that long period of time.

The United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) to assist the Haitian Government in the professionalization of the Haitian National Police had its mandate renewed by Security Council resolution 1212 (1998) of 25 November 1998. This mandate was to have expired 30 November 1999, but was renewed until 15 March 2000 by Security Council resolution 1277 (1999). It has also been recognized that since the creation of the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti the Haitian National Police has made significant progress in the fulfilment of its responsibilities, in spite of the shortcomings mentioned earlier.

The President of Haiti, Mr. René Préval, in his letter to the Secretary-General of 8 November 1999, praises the valuable role played by the United Nations in Haiti and recognizes the relevance of an institutional support mission, which, he points out, could contribute to

> "the democratization process and assist the Government of Haiti in strengthening the judiciary and professionalizing the Haitian National Police". *(A/54/629, appendix)*

In his report to the General Assembly, document A/54/625 of 22 November 1999, and his report to the Security Council, document S/1999/1184 of 18 November 1999, the Secretary-General stated that, in order to consolidate the achievements of the various United Nations missions in Haiti, a continued presence of the international community was desirable. Having consulted with the Haitian authorities and sent a needs assessment, the Secretary-General observed that the General Assembly might wish to consider the establishment of a mission to consolidate the gains achieved by the Haitians with the support of the International Civilian Mission and the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti.

Based on President Préval's letter and the recommendations of the Secretary-General, the country sponsors call on the Assembly to consider favourably this draft resolution, which establishes the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti.

We recognize that economic rehabilitation and reconstruction constitute the major tasks facing the people and the Government of Haiti and that significant international assistance is therefore indispensable for sustainable development. These have all along been the concerns addressed by the Economic and Social Council, as is reflected in its resolution 1999/11 of 27 July 1999.

Once again, the draft resolution before us is further proof of the commitment of the international community to continue its assistance to Haiti.

Finally, the sponsors wish to express their gratitude to the Secretary-General and other officers of the United Nations for their initiative and dedication in this matter.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): For some time now the people of Haiti have been involved in a battle to improve respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to strengthen Haiti's democratic institutions. Today we are pleased by how far we have come and by the significant and important results that have been achieved, primarily thanks to the support of the international community. At the same time, we cannot forget or underestimate how precarious are our achievements.

The partnership between the people of Haiti and the international community in the areas of democracy and human rights has undergone various transformations in response to the national situation and external constraints. Today this partnership is entering a crucial phase. The International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH —

which was deployed in February 1993 as a cooperative effort of the United Nations and the Organization of American States — will soon reach the end of its mandate, on 31 December 1999, in accordance with resolution 53/95 of 8 December 1998.

On this occasion I would like to extend to the Executive Director of MICIVIH, Mr. Colin Granderson, and to his colleagues the thanks of the Haitian people for their valuable work to improve respect for human rights and to strengthen institutions such as the police force, the judiciary, the prison system and the Office of the Ombudsman.

On the other hand, less than a month ago the Security Council decided to extend until 15 March 2000 the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), the mandate of which had been set to expire on 30 November 1999. The Council took this action so as to ensure a gradual transition to the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti. MIPONUH worked in close coordination with MICIVIH in professionalizing the Haitian National Police and can take pride in having fulfilled the task entrusted to it by the Security Council.

With these two deadlines — 31 December 1999 and 15 March 2000 — rapidly approaching, all those involved in the struggle of the Haitian people to promote democracy and human rights are particularly worried about how to establish reliable mechanisms to consolidate the democratic advances made, under the difficult conditions resulting from the scale of the problems affecting the well-being of the people and seriously limiting development.

The current situation strongly obliges us to strengthen the partnership of the international community and Haiti. Bearing in mind that "development is another name for peace", we believe that — for countries such as ours that are emerging from crises — the international community's new approach to assistance must take into account not only justice and human rights, but also economic and social development.

In this connection, allow me to recall here that Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/11, which was adopted at the Council's 1999 substantive session in response to a request from the Security Council, calls for the preparation of a long-term assistance programme for Haiti. My country hopes that the various recommendations contained in that resolution will soon be acted upon.

Because of all the aforementioned concerns — namely, filling the vacuum that will be left by MIPONUH and MICIVIH as regards efforts to consolidate democracy in Haiti, to improve the human rights situation and subsequently to create a framework that will encourage the implementation of the provisions of the Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/11 — the President of the Republic of Haiti, Mr. René Préval, in his 8 November 1999 letter to the Secretary-General, expresses the hope that an institutional support mission can be established, a mission whose personnel would be neither uniformed nor armed and whose objective would be to support the democratization process in Haiti. This proposal was reflected in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, document S/1999/1184 of 18 November 1999.

Draft resolution A/54/L.36, establishing the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), now before the Assembly, responds to all these concerns, and we ask the Assembly to adopt it by consensus.

Before concluding, allow me to thank the Member States that have sponsored this draft resolution.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): During the past year we have witnessed some encouraging developments in the process of bringing Haiti back onto the road to democracy. A new Government has been appointed, a Provisional Electoral Council has been established, and preparations for elections have started. But there have also been setbacks. The high level of violence continues unabated. The increase in political violence is of particular concern in a country that is trying to lay the foundation for a sound and lasting democracy.

We are pleased to note that the dates for the election of a new parliament have been announced, and we take it that there will be no further delay. We expect these elections to be held in accordance with international requirements, and we expect that the Haitian people will be encouraged to exercise their right to vote. To ensure broad participation, voters must be convinced that if they exercise their voting rights the result will constitute an important step in the development of a democratic and stable Government. As the Secretary-General states in his report, elections

> "may not result in political normality if the underlying critical issues are not addressed, in particular the lack of a broad consensus on social

and economic development policies and on the exercise of political power". (*A/54/625, para. 64*)

Security is likely to become a growing problem in the period leading up to elections unless the appropriate bodies immediately take responsibility for effective action to improve the situation. The fledgling Haitian police force will be expected to do its best to contain unrest and reduce tension, but the main responsibility for easing the tension rests firmly in the hands of Haiti's political leaders.

The Norwegian Government has been one of the contributors to a consultation process aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Haitian leadership and of Haitian State institutions to deal with the development challenges facing the country. So far, five meetings have been held as part of the consultation process, the two most recent in Haiti itself. Our position is that the process should result in the creation of a broad coalition which will conduct discussions on Haiti's political, economic and social future. A key step in making this feasible will be to build a consistent and thorough understanding of the very complex and dismal reality that faces Haiti, and of its development. To that end, the Norwegian Government will be financing a survey by the United Nations Development Programme of living conditions to provide a foundation for planning and for political discussions regarding present and future challenges in Haiti.

As we see it, the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) and the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) have made vital contributions to the moderate but significant progress I mentioned earlier. We believe it is of the utmost importance that the international community assist in setting up a mechanism within the United Nations for the continuation of their work, even though the ultimate responsibility for strengthening the police force lies with the Government of Haiti.

Norway welcomes the establishment of the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti to consolidate the results achieved by previous missions. We fully agree with the timetable and the mandate proposed in the draft resolution (A/54/L.36) on this agenda item, of which Norway is a sponsor.

Norway gives its full support to the United Nations in its involvement and considers the maintenance of a United Nations presence in Haiti to be of the utmost importance. Nevertheless, the main responsibility for consolidating democracy and ensuring respect for human rights in Haiti remains with the people and the Government of Haiti. The international community must, however, support the Haitians in their efforts to build a democratic society and to achieve economic and social development. Norway will shoulder its responsibility to ensure a continued international commitment to Haiti.

Mr. Duval (Canada) (*spoke in French*): In his letter to the Secretary-General of 8 November 1999, the President of Haiti, His Excellency Mr. René Préval, clearly expressed his wish that an institutional support mission should be undertaken to support the democratization process in Haiti, as well as to help the Government to strengthen the judicial system and put in place a more professional national police force.

In his reports to the General Assembly on democracy and human rights in Haiti, and in his reports to the Security Council on the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), the Secretary-General has stressed the need to continue helping the Haitian people achieve their objectives of development and democracy once the mandates of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) and of MIPONUH have ended.

The Friends of Haiti, in close consultation with the Secretariat and with Haiti, have spent weeks — even months — carefully preparing draft resolution A/54/L.36 on the creation of an International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), which is before the Assembly for its consideration.

The draft resolution would create the mission requested by President Préval and would take into account the recommendations of the Secretary-General. The new mission was designed very carefully to respond to the specific needs associated with the transition from a peacekeeping mission to a civilian mission.

A parallel resolution, Security Council resolution 1277 (1999), was adopted by the Security Council on 30 November 1999, to extend the mandate of MIPONUH until 15 March 2000 in order to ensure a gradual transition to MICAH. This transition period from MIPONUH to MICAH seemed essential in order to prepare for the new mission.

Logically, the draft resolution on MICAH should have been considered by the General Assembly before the end of MIPONUH's mandate and at the same time as the Security Council resolution. It is regrettable that after such intense preparations were made and such complex

political and financial issues were resolved, it took more than two weeks for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to consider this item, which delayed its consideration in the General Assembly. This caused us to lose two precious transitional weeks that we could have spent preparing for MICAH, two weeks for which we are accountable to the Haitians.

Canada is pleased to be a sponsor of the draft resolution that would create MICAH and is prepared to make a tangible contribution to the new mission. MICAH is a tailor-made solution, prepared by the Friends of Haiti, the Secretariat and the Haitians to adapt international assistance so that it responds appropriately to the need to consolidate the progress achieved by MICIVIH and MIPONUH.

MICAH will make it possible to complete the transition, which is already under way, from a military peacekeeping presence to a civilian police presence and eventually towards a long-term cooperation programme, as mentioned a moment ago by the representative of Haiti. The draft resolution on MICAH echoes the recommendations made by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/11 of 27 July 1999. The Economic and Social Council asked that the Secretary-General take the necessary steps, in agreement with the Government of Haiti, to develop a long-term strategy and programme of support for Haiti.

The draft resolution on MICAH clearly states that the responsibility for rebuilding Haiti, bringing about national reconciliation and maintaining a safe, stable political environment lies chiefly with the people and the Government of Haiti. MICAH is first and foremost a tool that the international community is offering to the Haitians so that they can tackle the many challenges facing them as they strive to achieve these objectives.

The first challenge will be to hold credible legislative and local elections in order to re-establish Parliament, a pillar of democracy. We urge the Haitians once again to continue working to convene these elections within the time-frame set out in the electoral calendar.

The draft resolution on MICAH takes into account the Haitian reality that presidential elections will be held at the end of the year 2000 and extends the Mission's mandate to the eve of the President Elect's inauguration so that MICAH can provide Haiti with the best possible support during a period so crucial to the country's democracy.

MICAH will provide Haiti with broader, better-targeted and better-coordinated support. The Mission will comprise approximately 100 international experts working as technical advisers to strengthen Haiti's institutions and to assist in its democratization through activities on three fronts: the legal system, the police and human rights. The Mission will be headed by a representative of the Secretary-General, who, in addition to directing the United Nations activities in Haiti, will ensure the transparency and coordination of the Mission's activities by maintaining a follow-up dialogue with the principal Haitian actors and with donors.

MICAH is a new type of mission. Its success will depend largely on its preparedness. It is therefore important that work begin as soon as the General Assembly adopts the resolution creating it today. MIPONUH is being maintained to facilitate the transition, not to delay it. In particular, we feel that the choice of experts comprising the new Mission will be a key to its success. All due care and creativity must be shown in recruiting them.

It will also take time to harmonize MICAH's activities with the many multilateral and bilateral programmes in place, such as the Canadian programmes offering police and legal support. But above all, we will need to ensure that MICAH does not represent an ad hoc intervention; rather, it must constitute a step on the path that Haiti has chosen, an instrument that will consolidate past gains and put in place the necessary elements for long-term support in Haiti.

(*spoke in English*)

The time has therefore come to begin pondering the steps to be taken following MICAH. Canada is urging the Secretary-General to ensure that the process for developing a long-term strategy for Haiti takes place in consultation with all the actors at both the multilateral level — the World Bank and other international financial institutions — and the bilateral level. Canada is aware of the importance of this process and we will be paying special attention to the outcome of these efforts.

Finally, the creation of MICAH could mark the end of seven years of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) in the context of MICIVIH. Canada would like to extend its sincere thanks and express its admiration for the perseverance and courage shown by members of MICIVIH, in particular by its Executive Director,

Ambassador Colin Granderson. MICIVIH has laid a solid foundation for MICAH and its strong nature makes it an example to be followed. We hope that the Organization of American States will continue in the future to work actively in its areas of expertise in Haiti.

Mr. Molina Cuadra (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We make this statement on behalf of the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic. Our delegations express their thanks and gratitude for the important and valuable information provided on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti by the Secretary-General in his note of 20 September, contained in document A/54/366. Similarly, we highlight the information provided in the letter of 22 November 1999 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly on the same item, contained in document A/54/629.

Addressing issues of democracy and human rights is always an important challenge from which we cannot and must not shy away. Countries such as ours throughout our region have been greatly affected in this regard, as has the development of our political, social and economic lives. Undoubtedly, this issue can be applied and considered universally.

On the specific case of the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, we wish to express our satisfaction in noting that, according to the Secretary-General's documents, despite the difficulties of the situation in Haiti, some important achievements have been made in areas that fall under the broad heading of democracy and human rights. However, the challenges remain great to local authorities in Haiti, on the one hand, and to the international community on the other in the contexts of mechanisms of cooperation and assistance and of the United Nations system.

The international community, and Latin America in particular, have witnessed the difficult situation affecting the Haitian people in their attempts to overcome their serious political, social and economic problems. We also know from our own experience that this transition is not easy and that achievements made, however small they may appear, are very valuable and significant — more so still when they lay the foundations for new successes in the near future.

The positive achievements in the area of democracy and human rights, as well as in such fields as the rights of women — including the November 1997 session in Port-au-Prince of the International Tribunal for the Eliminatio Violence against Haitian Women — have borne frui recent years.

Achievements made in some areas with respec public freedom and, in general, a certain positive tr in the political situation should be consolidated as basis for the Haitian people's ongoing progress improving their overall living standards. However must be recognized that continued international assista towards full success in this difficult task is essential if Haitian people are to greet the new millennium renewed hope for building peace and tolerance and u their best efforts to overcome the economic problems still face their nation.

We wish to express our sincere hope that forthcoming general elections will be another fa assisting Haiti's efforts to consolidate the process democratization in this transitional period strengthening the situation of human rights. We appe the international community to make the forthcon elections a real and irreversible opportunity to impr the situation in Haiti and, in particular, to establish a United Nations assistance mission, bearing in mind fact that the United Nations presence in Haiti remai very positive factor for overall developments.

In conclusion, our delegations wish to express hope that the process of democratization in Haiti — full success of which depends primarily on coopera among all parties and on the various sectors of Ha society — will mark an irreversible step tow improved well-being for the citizens of Haiti, children, their young people and all those who dese better life and wish to preserve and strengthen it.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): I have the honour to spea behalf of the European Union. The Central and Ea European countries associated with the Euro Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Est Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slov Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Associ country member of the European Economic Area Ice align themselves with this statement.

The European Union thanks the Secretary-Ge for his excellent and detailed report on Haiti. European Union remains deeply concerned abou political and institutional crises that Haiti has been fa since June 1997. The democratic transition proce

Haiti has, unfortunately, not yet come to a point where the international community could cease its presence there.

The European Union believes that a lasting solution to the crises will be possible only through elections conducted in a free, honest and open atmosphere. We therefore note with satisfaction that parliamentary elections will be held in March and April of next year. The importance of these elections cannot be overestimated, and it is therefore imperative that everything possible be done to ensure that they are organized in a democratic, transparent and orderly manner and that all possible efforts be made to guarantee the highest possible participation.

The maintenance of security during and after the elections is of major importance. We believe that preparing for this important task should be a key priority for the Haitian National Police. It is also essential that all of Haiti's political actors commit themselves to ensuring that the forthcoming electoral process will lead to a reinforcement of Haiti's institutions, which will in turn form the basis for its long-term sustainable development.

The European Union shares the view of the Secretary-General that it is the overriding responsibility of Haiti's political leaders to involve themselves with a constructive dialogue and to become real partners in their country's future.

The European Union supports fully all United Nations actions towards the electoral process and calls on all States to contribute, according to their ability, to these efforts.

Haiti has for several years been aided on its path to democracy by consecutive United Nations and international operations, the latest being the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH). The European Union wishes to express its appreciation to these Missions and their members for the indispensable role they have played and for the valuable work they have done.

The mandates of these operations will soon expire, but their tasks are not yet completed. Much remains to be done. Political instability and institutional frailty prevail. The security situation is deteriorating. There is an upsurge of crime and political violence. The institutional consolidation of the new police force has been hampered by lack of resources and equipment, organizational weaknesses and efforts to gain political control of the force. Criminal activity and drug trafficking within its ranks are further weakening the effectiveness of the reform.

It is thus crucial that a United Nations presence is maintained in Haiti. The responsibility for consolidating democracy and ensuring respect for human rights lies primarily with the Government of Haiti, but the European Union is ready, together with the international community, to help it in this task.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The European Union warmly welcomes the draft resolution under discussion, prepared by the Group of Friends of Haiti. The European Union also welcomes the innovative work done earlier this year by the Economic and Social Council and the ad hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. Their recommendations, contained in the Secretary-General's report, form the basis for a viable transition for a new mission in Haiti, after the end of MIPONUH and MICIVIH.

The new Mission — the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) — will continue to consolidate the results already achieved, while allowing a coordinated approach to improving the climate of respect for democracy, good governance and human rights in an integrated manner, and strengthening civil society. It is essential that the Mission's activities be complementary to other multilateral and bilateral programmes.

The European Union fully supports the focus of the new Mission, which has three main pillars: justice, human rights and police. We especially appreciate the new focus on justice issues. A properly functioning judicial system, an organizationally sound police force and full respect for human rights are cornerstones of a democratic society. These objectives are key in a volatile political situation and a foundation for a more long-term approach.

The European Union reaffirms the principle that special political missions should be financed primarily from the regular budget and that MICAH, taking into account its technical cooperation element, cannot be viewed in any case as a precedent. In this context, the European Union welcomes the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and fully endorses the request of the Fifth Committee to the Secretary-General to report to the

General Assembly for further action should the extra-budgetary resources for the Mission become insufficient. The European Union also calls upon Member States that have promised to do so to provide their voluntary contributions to MICAH as soon as possible and to ensure that they are used in a spirit of neutrality and multilateralism.

Today the European Union is the largest donor in Haiti. The European Union supports Haiti in all major sectors. For instance, a substantive new project in the justice sector is being prepared. The European Union reiterates its willingness to support the electoral process, subject to assurances by the Haitian Government to respect the calendar set for the elections. We continue to be committed to assisting in all key areas necessary for helping Haiti in its efforts to become a democratic, safe and peaceful country.

Mrs. Ramírez (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution whose adoption we are endorsing represents the final stage of an undertaking that is almost unprecedented in the history of the United Nations. The creation of the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) is one of the final links in the process of coordinating the various stages of the settlement of a conflict. The maintenance of peace, which was the goal of the mandate of the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) and of the other missions that preceded it, will be followed by a stage in which the focus is the consolidation of peace, governmental institutions and a democratic system. All of the main bodies involved in this process have carried out their tasks to the fullest.

Indeed, when the Security Council adopted resolution 1212 (1998), a process of coordination began among the main bodies of this Organization. Based on Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/11, the group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Haiti, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Haitian Government, prepared the draft resolution that we are considering, which will establish the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) and which is co-sponsored by the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

As a result of this process and of the joint work of MIPONUH and the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) — Missions that will be succeeded by MICAH — the Haitian institutions have been strengthened. In particular, the Haitian National Police has achieved a level of professionalism, as is reflected in paragraph 60 of the Secretary-General's report on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, document A/54/625, which states,

> "Accountability has become a vital aspect of the new institutional ethos of the police."

However, the same report warns that this institution is not yet mature as an institution and lacks self-confidence. Thus, *inter alia*, it would be advisable for the United Nations presence in Haiti to continue. This was recognized both by President René Préval in his letter dated 8 November 1999, in which he requested the deployment of this Mission, and in the report of the Secretary-General.

Since the beginning of the United Nations presence in Haiti, Argentina has manifested its commitment to maintaining the democratic institutions in Haiti by providing resources and military and police personnel, and we hope to continue doing so in the context of this new Mission that we are establishing. For the time being this effort is continuing through the provision of support for the special police unit of MIPONUH, whose mandate was extended, for technical reasons, until 15 March 2000 by Security Council resolution 1277 (1999).

The deployment of this Mission is made possible primarily thanks to the responsibility with which the Haitian authorities have acted. President René Préval has shown himself to be capable of dealing with the historical circumstances now facing his country.

We also express our gratitude to all the members of the main bodies of the United Nations that have participated in the transition process leading to the creation of MICAH. We also thank Mr. Julian Harston for the professionalism he showed as the Representative of the Secretary-General, and we welcome his successor, Mr. Alfredo Lopes Cabral, and offer him our full support for the fulfilment of his tasks.

We feel that the work done by Ambassador Michel Duval, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada, deserves special mention. During the most difficult phase he assiduously promoted the establishment of this new Mission, which will ensure the continued presence of the United Nations in Haiti.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

As a member of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General, we would simply like to note that we are pleased that the General Assembly will be adopting this draft resolution and establishing the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH). France is particularly encouraged by the active involvement of the Haitian authorities in the preparation and negotiation of this draft resolution. We have no doubt that this commitment, which should be noted and supported, will allow swift progress to be made in the three proposed areas of cooperation: police, justice and human rights. It will also, we believe, help democracy take root in Haiti.

As it has done in the past, France intends to continue supporting the work of the United Nations in Haiti, particularly that of the new Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alfredo Lopes Cabral. We truly hope that there will be fully coordinated and integrated action by the United Nations to support the development of Haiti. This action must be carried out in full cooperation with the national authorities and in conjunction with the other international actors. We think that the Representative of the Secretary-General has an essential role to play here.

We hope that MICAH's achievements will be commensurate with the objectives we are setting for it, and that MICAH will be given all the resources it needs. We would have preferred the Mission to be fully financed from the regular budget and thus to depend less on the goodwill of a few external partners. However, we welcome the proposals made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the Fifth Committee, which we think will help, fortunately, to limit any risk of slippage here. We naturally hope that all voluntary contributions will be paid with respect for the independence, neutrality and multilateral nature of MICAH.

Mr. Bivero (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution that the General Assembly has before it represents both the end of a cycle of activities in which our Organization has been engaged in support of Haiti and the beginning of another process. With the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) and the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) reaching the end of their mandates and with the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) about to get under way by means of this draft resolution, the Organization will have concluded a stage of peacekeeping and of restoring democratic freedoms and will begin a process of support for the consolidation of civil peace, of the strengthening of institutions that nurture democracy and human rights, and of support for economic development.

Venezuela welcomes this transition and trusts that the objectives and mandates of the new Mission will have the broadest backing of the international community. Particular mention needs to be made of the Haitian authorities and of Haitian society as a whole. As President Préval's letter suggests, in the final analysis it is they who have come to accept international assistance as a means of support as they seek to resolve the difficulties originating in political situations that today, fortunately, have been overcome. They have agreed to an ongoing effort to also be able to overcome the negative consequences of these situations in fields that are critical to the stability and development of their country.

As a participating member of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Haiti since the initiation of the process, Venezuela is pleased to support the Government and the people of Haiti in their efforts to fully recover the best of their traditions of freedom. In a fraternal spirit we call on them to persevere on the always challenging road towards the full and continuous exercise of democratic freedoms, towards the revitalization of their democratic institutions, and towards full economic and social development.

MICAH's priority areas of activity should focus the international community's efforts on these objectives. At the same time, the draft resolution envisages mechanisms for continuing to ensure the coherence of these efforts, in particular as regards assistance for development. This is part of the important contribution made by the Economic and Social Council.

In this way we are certain that the elements most necessary for the consolidation of democracy — human rights, social peace and development — will be successfully engaged.

For all these reasons, and associating ourselves with the comments made by the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Venezuela believes that this draft resolution establishing MICAH deserves the General Assembly's unanimous support.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.36, entitled "International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/54/L.36 was adopted (resolution 54/193).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 48.

Agenda item 96

Question of East Timor (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/654)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.73)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.73.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): Indonesia is deeply gratified to be sponsoring, along with Portugal, draft resolution A/54/L.73, on agenda item 96, entitled "Question of East Timor". We are profoundly heartened by the untiring endeavours of all parties in attaining our common goal. Notwithstanding the formidable obstacles and the many challenges, we have been steadfast in our commitment to reaching a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor, under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

It was that unswerving commitment and sincerity that facilitated agreement between the United Nations, Indonesia and Portugal with the signing of the 5 May 1999 New York Agreement. The effective implementation of that Agreement led to the popular consultation of the East Timorese people on 30 August 1999, in which more than 90 per cent participated in direct, democratic balloting organized and supervised by the United Nations.

In line with its resolve, the Indonesian Government abided by its responsibility and commitment to see to it that the choice made by the East Timorese was respected, and that their separation from Indonesia was carried out in an orderly, peaceful and dignified manner. In that regard, it is pertinent to note that the Indonesian armed forces and police personnel began to withdraw from East Timor following the Security Council's establishment of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), and the deployment of the Force on 20 September 1999.

Subsequently, the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly, in line with article 6 of the Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Portugal on the question of East Timor, took the constitutional step of formally adopting decision 5/MPR/1999 on 20 October 1999 concerning the popular consultation in East Timor. By that constitutional act, Indonesia's solemn responsibility to East Timor, which began 24 years ago, was brought to a close. Today, East Timor has begun a process of transition under the authority of the United Nations towards eventual independence.

It is therefore both timely and appropriate for the General Assembly to close its consideration of this question and to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session a new item entitled "The situation in East Timor during its transition to independence". That would be an auspicious beginning for the people of East Timor as they face not only a new era in their lives, but also, along with the rest of the world, a new millennium.

The adoption of this draft resolution would open a new chapter in the lives of the East Timorese people at this important juncture, as they embark on the work of nation-building. We therefore commend draft resolution A/54/L.73 to the General Assembly for adoption by consensus, especially because the draft resolution is the product of sustained efforts between Indonesia and Portugal, in conjunction with close consultations with the Secretariat.

I wish in conclusion to express our sincere appreciation to all those who have worked tirelessly to bring to an end the question of East Timor. Our thanks go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the two previous Secretaries-General, for the holding of the tripartite dialogue with Indonesia and Portugal. Particular thanks go also to the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General on the question of East Timor, Mr. Jamsheed Marker.

The Acting President: I call now on the representative of Portugal, also to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.73.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): The draft resolution before us on the question of East Timor (A/54/L.73) represents a milestone not only for East Timor but also for the United Nations: for East Timor because after 3 years the East Timorese people have finally been able to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination and

independence, and for the United Nations because, thanks to the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his representatives, Mr. Jamsheed Marker and Mr. Ian Martin, a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor has been found — a solution, I should say, that many felt it would be impossible to achieve.

Indonesia and Portugal can also express their satisfaction today for having been able, through a negotiating process, to sign the 5 May Agreement and, through the work towards its implementation, to allow the East Timorese to exercise the right to self-determination. Despite the difficulties this process faced, the key development to note and welcome is that, through their massive participation in the popular consultation, the people of East Timor were able to choose their future freely and to begin building their own country, which may well be the first to join this Organization as a new Member in the new millennium.

The draft resolution before us emerged from the joint efforts of Indonesia and Portugal, in close consultation with the Secretariat, as was just underlined by my Indonesian colleague. Indonesia and Portugal have co-sponsored it and are jointly introducing it to the General Assembly today. The draft resolution opens a new phase for East Timor, which this Assembly will have a particular responsibility to follow: the transition of the Territory to independence. We urge the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus of this plenary.

The United Nations, through its Transitional Administration, is now faced with the immense task of leading East Timor to independence. The successful conclusion of this process will continue to depend fully on the engagement and commitment of the international community as a whole. The challenges ahead are considerable, but we are certain that the United Nations will be able to implement successfully its mandate in East Timor. The support of the international community for the reconstruction and transition to independence of East Timor will be fundamental. we must create the conditions for East Timor to be a success story: internal success, with democratic institutions and the rule of law, in which all Timorese without exception can find their place and benefit from the sustainable development of the country; and also external success, conducive to full regional integration and the establishment of relationships of close cooperation and friendship with neighbouring countries.

The Portuguese delegation would like to pay tribute to all those who have made this day possible, above all, of course, the East Timorese people themselves. Portugal is very grateful to the Secretary-General, his representatives and others who promoted and facilitated dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia.

We end with a word of deep appreciation to the United Nations staff who, under very difficult conditions, have been working hard to implement the mandate of the United Nations to bring a new dawn to East Timor.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.73.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/54/L.73 was adopted (resolution 54/194).

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly decides to conclude its consideration of agenda item 96?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 162

Observer status for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in the General Assembly

Draft resolution (A/54/L.7/Rev.2)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Ecuador to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) is one of the international bodies that were established after the Second World War — in 1948, to be precise — and emerged from a conference convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The legal norms governing the work of this organization have been updated over time and now constitute an international agreement that, in accordance with

paragraph 1 (a) of article 2 of the Convention on the Law of Treaties, fulfils the definition of a treaty.

The IUCN is unlike any other body, entity or organization and is therefore a *sui generis* case, unique in its composition. However, its 75 member States from Africa, Latin America, North America, Asia, Oceania, Eastern Europe and Western Europe, which are also Members of the United Nations, certainly consider the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources to be an intergovernmental body. These 75 members are ultimately responsible for all the decisions adopted by the organization.

The IUCN can make a positive contribution to the General Assembly's work through the information and constructive commentary provided by its experts and through its valuable experience in areas of particular interest to our Organization: peace, the world order and the equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources. Through its Commission on Environmental Law, the IUCN and its member States were able to draft a code of conduct for transnational parks and published, at the request of the Secretary-General, a United Nations list of national parks and protected areas. They also helped to establish and administer parks for peace in disputed border areas.

As to questions of the world order, the IUCN made an important contribution to the preparation of part XII of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. If, however, there were one element in particular that deserved to be stressed, it would be the pioneering contribution of the IUCN to establishing the concept of sustainable development and its subsequent application through relevant projects and policies.

At present, the IUCN is working in over 139 nations and has formal agreements of cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other specialized agencies of the United Nations, as well as the World Bank.

At the World Congress for the Conservation of Nature, held in Montreal, Canada, in 1996, the member States of the IUCN instructed their Council to consider ways in which they could cooperate further with the United Nations. In April 1998, the IUCN Council decided to propose to the General Assembly that it be granted observer status. In October of the same year, at its fifty-third session, the General Assembly considere conclusion of an additional item on the granti observer status to the IUCN. Consideration of tha was postponed to the fifty-fourth session.

At this session, the Assembly's General Com included this item on the agenda, to be conside plenary. On 8 October, a few minutes before the resolution was to be adopted, the Secretariat inform that certain members of the General Assembly wis comment on the draft.

From then until the end of last week, the spo were involved in a lengthy negotiating proces culminated in the draft before us.

To be frank, I have to say that the solutio reached is not the best one. However, it is an agree that will accord the IUCN status within the U Nations, since that body, having been granted obs status in the General Assembly, relinquished in 1999 its status as a consultative body withi Economic and Social Council. In addition, it estab procedure for the future. That procedure will preve plenary from becoming involved in intermi discussions, as was the case this year, and ensur interested organizations and countries have a foru present their arguments in favour of intergovernm organizations that wish to be admitted as observers General Assembly.

In conclusion, I should like to express my de gratitude to the sponsoring States for their val cooperation, generosity and understanding, which it possible to find a solution to the problem. I would like to thank the delegations of the other countries in one way or another, made possible the introdu today, at long last, on behalf on all the sponsors — w now include Japan and Luxembourg — of the resolution contained in document A/54/L.7/Rev.2. I that this draft will be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): I have the honour to spea behalf of the European Union on the question of obs status for the International Union for the Conservatio Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). The Central Eastern European countries associated with the Euro Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Esto Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slov and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Associa

country member of the European Economic Area Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is very supportive of the work of the IUCN, also known as the World Conservation Union, which is one of the world's oldest transnational organizations dedicated to promoting and conserving the equitable use of natural resources. The tasks and the main objectives of the IUCN usefully support and complement the work done under the auspices of the United Nations to promote conservation of the integrity and diversity of nature through the equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources.

The manifold activities of the IUCN include taking measures to save endangered species, working with communities to achieve sustainable development, creating natural parks and other protected areas, and assessing the status of ecosystems. The IUCN serves as one of the main technical advisors to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It has considerable experience and expertise in providing environmental education. Inviting the IUCN to participate in the General Assembly in the capacity of observer will facilitate cooperation between the United Nations and the IUCN in numerous fields of common interest and will thereby contribute greatly to the work of the Organization. The European Union fully supports the proposed draft resolution.

The European Union is aware of legal concerns related to the *sui generis* structure provided for by the statute of the IUCN. While the World Conservation Union plays an important role in the field of the conservation of nature and natural resources that is relevant to the work of the General Assembly — and that needs to be recognized — the criteria laid down in decision 49/426 for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly remain valid.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2?

Draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2 was adopted (resolution 54/195).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Bergeron (United States of America): I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my country's unwavering support for the work of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. We fully support its observer status in the General Assembly and believe the General Assembly took an appropriate decision today.

I would be remiss, however, if I failed to make clear my country's opposition to the way in which the procedural amendments present in this resolution appeared. We would have been prepared to consider them in a separate draft resolution addressing the substantive issues implicit in these elements. Our opposition to the nature of their inclusion was the reason why my delegation withdrew its co-sponsorship of this resolution.

In closing, I would like to welcome IUCN to the General Assembly. We look forward to its participation in our work in the years to come.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

In accordance with the resolution just adopted, I now call on the observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Mr. Bhagwat-Singh (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources): On behalf of the President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Ms. Yolanda Kakabadse, Minister of the Environment of Ecuador, and on behalf of the Director General of IUCN, Ms. Maritta Koch-Weser, I would like to thank the General Assembly for the resolution which has just been adopted regarding observer status for the IUCN in the General Assembly.

The IUCN is grateful to the delegations of the Dominican Republic and Ecuador for submitting this item to the General Assembly one year ago, during the fiftieth-anniversary year of the establishment of the IUCN. May I also express our sincere appreciation to the

Member States that sponsored this resolution for their support and confidence in the work of the IUCN.

Fifty years ago the idea of sustainable development existed, but it had not yet found a voice in the policy of international organizations. The French Republic and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, along with several other States, government ministries concerned with nature and expert scientific and professional associations, established what is today the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources at Fontainebleau. The IUCN's 75 States members have built a strong programme for sustainability.

We must acknowledge our debt today to many officials and experts who have laboured at the IUCN's general assemblies and World Conservation Congresses and on the IUCN's Council; to the Swiss Confederation, which was one of the founding members of the IUCN and is the State where the IUCN has its present headquarters; to the IUCN's expert commissions and the current Director General and her predecessors. Thanks to their foresight and hard work, since 1962 the IUCN has been and remains the authority responsible for preparing the Secretary-General's list of protected areas, for providing expert services for conventions and for providing expertise for sustainable development in all the regions of the world.

The IUCN's Parks for Peace programme helps promote friendly relations among neighbouring States through the common stewardship of parks along their borders. There are more than 75 such parks in the work today. The IUCN pioneered the concept of sustainable development in its world conservation strategy, which it launched in 1980.

Today the IUCN has 43 offices throughout the world. The IUCN will be privileged to provide its expert analysis and research on items before the General Assembly and to fully cooperate in the work of the General Assembly in its various activities. Recently, for instance, here at Headquarters, the IUCN, in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations University, conducted a workshop on international environmental law.

The IUCN is honoured and pleased to accept the invitation to participate as an observer in the work of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 162?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.85

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

85th plenary meeting
Monday, 20 December 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Floods and mudslides in Venezuela

The President: Before turning to the item on our agenda for this morning, may I, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, extend deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Venezuela for the tragic loss of life and extensive material damage that have resulted from the recent floods and mudslides.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help by the Government and people of Venezuela.

Mr. Bivero (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should simply like to say that the Government of Venezuela greatly appreciates the message of solidarity and sympathy that you, Mr. President, have just expressed on behalf of all the members of the General Assembly regarding the tragic losses suffered in my country. As you said, Sir, a very great tragedy has occurred in Venezuela as a result because of the persistent rains that have fallen throughout the year in the central part of the country, which, on 16 December, led to massive flooding and mudslides in the central mountain range, affecting densely populated regions, particularly the central coastal regions near the capital city and where the country's main airport and port are located.

From information being coordinated through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, it is estimated that over 150,000 people have been affected by that natural phenomenon, and an estimate of the number of deaths, which is still tentative, is over 2,000. The coordination effort for international assistance began immediately. We have received great evidence of solidarity from Member States, and I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one for the messages of solidarity and the material assistance and human resources that they have provided to help my country deal with the situation. Prolonged efforts will be required if we are to recover from the situation as it stands now. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has, through its warning mechanisms, conveyed the status of the situation, and we appeal to all friendly countries to remain in contact regarding the most pressing needs of international assistance.

Once again, I wish simply to express my sincere gratitude for the sympathy expressed today. Again, we want to thank all Member States for their solidarity and assistance in this tragic situation affecting my country.

Agenda item 38 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

00-21766 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Mr. Tomka (Slovakia): Strengthening the Security Council, as well as enhancing its representativeness and credibility, remains the central task of any serious effort at reforming the United Nations. It is in no way a simple task. The inability of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform to make any significant progress with regard to cluster 1 issues since January 1994, when its work began, proves the complexity of the issue, as well as the fundamental divergence of views, reflecting different national interests and different regional perceptions. While there is general agreement that the Security Council should be expanded and thus reflect the new political realities in the global scene, as well as the increase in the general membership during the last three decades, there is no convergence of views on which category of membership should actually be enlarged or on how such enlargement should take place.

It is quite obvious that the issue of permanent membership and the right of the veto lies at the core of the problem. If Member States were able to find common ground on this issue — that is, agree on modalities for the enlargement of this category or agree not to increase that kind of membership — we would be much closer to reaching a final formula for Security Council reform.

There are several risks related to a possible enlargement in the permanent membership category to which we should not turn a blind eye. In our view, some important facts have been overlooked in this regard. The category of permanent membership was not designed or intended by the United Nations Charter's authors to be based on the simple principle of equitable geographical representation. It has specific parameters, determined by the political circumstances of the new global order that emerged after the Second World War. The five permanent members were chosen on an ad hoc basis, as they were believed to have immense military and economic resources as well as the political will to take the lead in handling all matters of peace and security.

Though we may argue about the continuing relevance of this concept on the threshold of a new century, or about the actual capability and willingness of its current members to play the role envisaged for them by the United Nations Charter, it is a fact that by ignoring the nature of this concept we risk enlarging this category in a way which is incompatible with its unique parameters — in other words, we might take the wrong approach, with unpredictable consequences for the functioning of an enlarged Security Council in the future.

The two-stage approach proposed by some, under which the General Assembly would as a first step decide to enlarge the permanent category by a specific number of seats, and then, at a later stage, make known the identity of the permanent members, is, in our view, the wrong approach. It is difficult to justify the act of signing a blank cheque without knowing to whom the check will be given.

I would like to point out that there has not yet been any serious discussion on clear criteria for selecting new permanent members. I believe that the determination of such criteria and their strict application are very important prerequisites if the parameters of this unique category are to be complied with and preserved. Otherwise, the continued existence of the permanent category might no longer make sense. We should not lose sight of this aspect, since even the criteria for the membership of non-permanent members, as is set out in Article 23 of the United Nations Charter, are not always treated seriously. As has become clear in recent years, geography has become more important than the actual contribution of the potential member to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the United Nations.

The regional aspects of the possible enlargement of the permanent category and the notion of regional rotational arrangements also have given rise to some concerns. Rotating permanent seats can hardly be considered permanent. In reality, they would be semi-permanent, provided that rotating members would have the right of veto. Without the veto power, this would simply create a new category of more frequently rotating non-permanent members, which might be interesting and worthy of further discussion. Nevertheless, this would be another item on the agenda of Security Council reform.

Potential new permanent members should be capable of assuming not only regional but also, and more importantly, global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. There are a number of regional organizations dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security, but the United Nations is the only global forum to do so. Placing too much emphasis on regional aspects in connection with the permanent membership of the Security Council could lead to the fragmentation of the global character of this unique body.

In order to be fair, the veto power must be extended to potential new permanent members in order to avoid

discrimination between the original permanent members and the new ones, since the veto is an essential element of permanent membership. However, the veto itself is a crucial issue in Security Council reform. Although originally designed to foster unity and promote the quest for an understanding among the great Powers, the veto turned out to be an oft-misused tool, both in the ideological battle among bitter rivals during the cold war and in the pursuit of narrow national interests. Even now, the veto and its latent threat sometimes paralyse the Security Council, preventing it from taking effective action on behalf of Member States. This could lead to the erosion of the authority of the Security Council and consequently of its central role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is very unlikely that a great number of the "owners" of the veto power would rectify the situation. I am afraid that, on the contrary, the Security Council might become a mere discussion club, unable to act swiftly and decisively. Moreover, the current scope of application of the veto raises a number of concerns of a legal nature. The rules of procedure of the Security Council have failed to clarify the scope of application of the veto in the last decades and therefore remain provisional.

Slovakia recognizes as legitimate the efforts to secure an adequate position in an enlarged Security Council made by certain countries which are capable of assuming global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The aspirations of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean region to ensure their appropriate representation in an enlarged Security Council are also fully understandable.

The core of the problem, in our view, is an increasingly different perception of the Council's legitimacy, which is affected, first, by the nature and composition of the Council and, secondly, by the degree to which Council's members are perceived to take into account in their deliberations the interests of other Member States. There is a growing suspicion on the part of Third World countries regarding what they perceive to be domination of the Security Council by the western Powers. It is they who, since at least 1979, have been in the forefront of a drive to increase their influence in the Council. Nevertheless, the strong competition among each of these continents for the proposed new permanent seats, the question of rotation and disagreements over the veto make it very unlikely that concrete results will be reached in the foreseeable future. As I have already suggested, a possible increase in the permanent category is interlinked with a number of concerns, and we should carefully consider their implications for the future functioning of a new Council.

We believe that in order to keep the United Nations abreast of our rapidly changing world, Security Council reform should focus on the issues on which we are most likely to find common ground. If there is no agreement on other categories of membership, Slovakia is ready to support, at this stage, expansion of the non-permanent category only. The size of the enlarged Security Council would then depend on the scenario eventually agreed to by Member States.

A considerable convergence of views has emerged on a number of issues concerning the working methods and transparency of the work of the Security Council, which are contained in cluster II. My country supports efforts aimed at improving the working methods and enhancing the transparency of the work of the Council. At the same time, the measures already adopted by the Council should be fully and effectively implemented. We also believe that the progress already made on cluster II issues should not be a hostage to the stalemate in cluster I.

In conclusion, let me express, on behalf of the delegation of Slovakia, our appreciation of the work of the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, namely that of its former Chairman, Mr. Didier Opertti, and of the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Hans Dahlgren and Ambassador John de Saram, for the remarkable manner in which they conducted the discussions of the Working Group.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, allow me to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Chairman of the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Related Matters, and his two Vice-Chairmen on the efforts they made to reach a consensus reflecting international opinion on reform and expansion of the Security Council, particularly in the light of the current international situation.

We should also like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your continued efforts to promote the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The economic and political developments in international relations; the far-reaching changes that have taken place, particularly in the wake of the end of the cold war; and the accession of many new States to the membership of the United Nations all have made it imperative that the Security Council be reformed, its membership increased and its methods of work and activities made more effective in the discharge of the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

Although six years have passed since the Working Group was created, and there have been many comprehensive meetings and deliberations, as well many periodic reports reflecting the results of these meetings, clear differences remain as to the size of the proposed increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council, the equitable and just geographic distribution of seats, the sovereign equality of States and the need to ensure democracy and transparency in the Council's procedures and methods of work, including in its decision-making processes. Thus the debate needs to be redirected in a comprehensive and harmonious way to ensure the common political interests of all States.

The continuing under-representation of non-aligned States in the Council — given that the majority of the Member States of this international organization are non-aligned States — creates an imbalance in international relations. Therefore, we support all efforts to rectify this imbalance by promoting and, indeed, achieving a better, more just representation of these States in the Council, so as to reflect their important, influential role in current international affairs.

While we attach great importance to the role of the Security Council in tackling many issues pertaining to international peace and security, we also support calls for promoting consultation and coordination with those Member States concerned with issues before it, taking into account the security, political, economic and social interests of these States.

In this context, we support the proposal set forth in the working paper presented by the Group of Arab States to reserve a permanent Council seat for the Arab States of Asia and Africa. It would be filled on a rotating basis through the cooperation and coordination of the Groups of Asian and African States. The seat would be in addition to these Groups' non-permanent representation on the Council.

We would like to express our appreciation of the positive measures that have been taken by the Security Council in the past few years to improve its methods of work. In particular we appreciate the procedure of holding open meetings to deliberate on the positions and proposals of States on relevant issues. We call for the promotion of such measures in a framework of objectivity, so that the Council's methods, consultations and procedures can be institutionalized.

We also support proposals for a review of the use of the veto in order to limit and rationalize its use and ensure that the majority is not prevented from taking decisions reflecting the positions of the international community vis-à-vis ongoing problems.

We also call for a regular, comprehensive and objective review of the Security Council's activities so that the nature of the challenges facing the implementation of its resolutions and objectives can be studied — such challenges as continued conflicts, occupation and aggravated humanitarian situations in many regions of the world. In this context, there must be better coordination and consultation between the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and regional organizations. We believe that such coordination can be most useful in containing conflict and strife.

In conclusion, we want the Security Council to be more representative, more democratic and more transparent and its work more credible. In this way, it can fully take up its historic and legal responsibilities and express the true current economic and political situation.

Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam): Viet Nam attaches great importance to agenda item 38, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". Over the last six years commendable efforts have been made with a view to bringing this question to a satisfactory outcome.

We are now at a critical stage in our vigorous efforts to achieve a reformed and expanded Security Council, more transparent and democratic in its work, more accountable and representative in its membership. The most outstanding point to note is the general agreement of the Member States on the need to reform the working methods and to expand the membership of the Security Council. However, there remain major differences of views among the Member States. The

whole process is truly very complex and challenging. But we strongly believe that the current impasse must be broken if the common aspiration of the international community to a democratic and accountable Security Council is to be heeded.

The objective of this exercise surely is to bring the Council more in tune with the economic and political realities of our time and to come to grips with the challenges of the next century. Council reform will be durable and fruitful only if it fully reflects the principles of the sovereign equality of Member States, equitable geographical distribution, accountability, democratization and transparency in the Council's working methods and procedures, including in its decision-making processes.

The genuine legitimacy of the Council's decisions relies heavily on the degree of accountability of the Council to the membership of the United Nations. Our delegation shares the view that the reform process must strengthen mechanisms to enable Council members, especially the permanent members, to act in the most responsible manner on behalf of all Member States.

On this occasion my delegation wishes to offer some brief comments on the two crucial elements of the reform exercise under consideration.

On the question of the expansion of the membership of the Council, we support the proposals to increase the number of seats in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. Viet Nam shares the overwhelming view that developing countries must have adequate representation on the Council. This need is underscored by the fact that most of the issues that today fall within the Council's authority arise in the developing world or involve vital interests of the developing countries. On the other hand, we also find it reasonable that new permanent seats should be allocated to industrialized countries that are willing to undertake greater commitments to and responsibility for the work of the United Nations.

In our view, five new permanent seats should be added to the Council membership. Given that there are quite a number of countries which may be eligible to become new permanent members of a reformed and expanded Security Council, Viet Nam is flexible with regard to the proposal to work out rotation arrangements that will allow more countries to shoulder the heavy responsibilities of the work of the Council, as well as of the United Nations. Although it is true that no magic figure can be found to accommodate every Member State, our delegation believes that a reformed Council of about 26 members could make the Council more representative and still ensure the requirement for efficiency.

Any formula for reform will fail to be satisfactory if the utilization of the veto power is not duly dealt with. We welcome the restraints exerted in recent years by the permanent members of the Council concerning the veto right. In this respect, our delegation wishes to reaffirm its support for the proposal that this power should be used by the permanent members only on issues that fall under the provisions embodied in Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, with a view to its final elimination.

Pending the total elimination of the veto power, Viet Nam shares the view that new permanent members of the Council should enjoy this right in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality. This will also help to redress the inherent imbalance of power between the developed and the developing countries in the Council.

On the eve of a new millennium, it is high time that more vigorous efforts be called for to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. It is important to underline the need for all Member States to address this question in a constructive and forward-looking manner. It is our fervent hope that when the Working Group reconvenes next year, we shall be in a position more conducive to embarking on concrete efforts to move the exercise further ahead. Towards this end, my delegation looks forward to making constructive contributions to the work of the Working Group.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today, the General Assembly is again debating one of the most important issues before it: the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

At the outset, I wish to express our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session and to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Dahlgren and De Saram, for their sincere efforts and the responsible work they undertook in a spirit of transparency. The report before us this morning is the fruit of their labours. It reflects our collective efforts over the past 12 months.

Six years have elapsed since discussion of this item began. At this point, the inevitable question is: What has been achieved so far in reforming the Security Council

and in improving its standing and role? The answer is: nothing, besides perhaps the marginalization of the Security Council and an erosion of its fundamental role in maintaining international peace and security, as situations require. Since the end of the cold war, hopes had been pinned on the reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council, as well as on an increase in the membership of the Council, in order to obtain a more just and democratic representation in this international Organization.

There has been great enthusiasm for this issue within the Non-Aligned Movement. All the Movement's conferences have addressed it with the utmost gravity, because the Movement is fully aware that, despite international developments and the vast increase in the number of States Members of the United Nations, those States do not enjoy genuine representation commensurate with their number, international influence and desire to express their legitimate interests. Furthermore, Germany and Japan, following major changes on the international scene, feel the importance of obtaining permanent membership in the Security Council. An important role has also emerged for Italy in seeking a third way between North and South. There seems to be no prospect, however, for an imminent solution likely to achieve consensus within the international Organization in this respect.

Throughout the past year, the debate in the General Assembly and the Working Group has revealed deep-seated differences between the permanent members of the Security Council and those States seeking to make the Council more democratic and transparent, particularly on the issues of expanding permanent and non-permanent membership and the use of the veto.

On the question of reforming of the Security Council, the voice of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement cannot be ignored, since they represent fully 80 per cent of this Organization's membership. While their interests in expanding and reforming the Security Council cannot be set aside, the demands of the African and Arab States must also be heeded. They have drafted working papers agreed upon at ministerial summit meetings and conferences, in which they seek to enhance their contribution to reactivating the United Nations and all its bodies. Moreover, the demands of Asian and other States cannot be ignored. Their interests have been clearly expressed in their formal statements on Security Council reform and expansion.

The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes once again to reaffirm the positions we have reiterated throughout the various phases of the debate. We wish in particular to reaffirm our commitment to the positions expressed by the Group of Arab States in two letters, the most recent of which is dated 2 February 1998. Both of these stress the following:

First, the composition of the Security Council must be truly democratic and reflect the increase in the number of States Members of the Organization.

Secondly, the membership of the Security Council must be increased to no fewer than 26 members. In other words, no fewer than 11 new members must be added. This is fully consistent with the position set forth by the Non-Aligned Movement.

Thirdly, if permanent membership of the Security Council is to be increased, the Group of Arab States demands a fully fledged permanent seat, to be rotated among Arab States based on the criteria used within the Group, as well as within the framework of consultations with the African and Asian Groups of States, to which all members of the Arab Group belong.

We believe that the use of the veto must be limited and rationalized as a first step towards the elimination of that right. In this regard, my delegation wonders about the logic behind the use of the veto in the case of a draft resolution before the Council that has received 14 out of 15 votes in favour. Would the use of the veto be in line with the principles of democracy, equality and just representation? Would it be in line with the interests of the United Nations and the achievement of peace, security and justice in the world?

On this basis, we believe that the veto right must be rationalized, because there is no need to use it when a draft resolution before the Security Council obtains majority support without hegemony exercised by any party. We reconfirm once again the position of the Non-Aligned Movement and of many other States on the question of the veto.

The Syrian delegation welcomes the statement you made, Mr. President, in opening the debate on this item, namely the importance of and need for conducting future debates within the Open-ended Working Group on equitable representation in the Security Council, because we believe it to be the appropriate forum for our deliberations.

Reforming the Security Council and expanding its membership must be an indivisible part of a joint and complementary effort where the principles of sovereign equality among States and equitable geographic distribution are respected, as is the need to ensure transparency, responsibility and democracy in the working methods of the Security Council, including consultation and decision-making. Non-member States must be made aware of the issues before the Security Council and of the results of deliberations and resolutions thereon.

My delegation calls once again for democratic procedures to ensure true democracy in decision-making in the Security Council. We reiterate that we are fully prepared to cooperate with you, Mr. President, and with all those States that aspire to these common interests and objectives.

Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan): My delegation is pleased to address the Assembly on the vital issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. As one of the delegations that first introduced the issue at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly in 1979, we are firmly committed to the goal of achieving a Council that is more democratic, transparent, effective, accountable and relevant to current global realities.

Six years have elapsed since the inception of the Open-ended Working Group, and we now stand at the threshold of a new millennium. It is a matter of some regret and concern that we have failed to reach agreement on one of the most critical issues before the Organization. This leads one to question the degree of sincerity that lies at the core of our efforts in this regard.

We note that while some progress and general convergence of views on cluster II issues relating to working methods and transparency of the Council's work has been achieved, as manifest in the new practices of the Council, substantial differences in views still remain on cluster I — the acrimonious issue of its expansion and composition. This, however, is not surprising, given the complexities of the issue, the sensitivities involved and the long-term implications.

My delegation wishes to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Didier Opertti, for his efforts to reinvigorate discussions within the Working Group. The adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 53/30, which established that decisions on Security Council reform must be adopted by the affirmative votes of two thirds of the membership of the United Nations, ensures that our proceedings on the question of Council reform will be governed by respect for the provisions of the Charter. We also believe that Mr. Opertti's letter of 22 June 1999 contributed much towards the airing and exchange of views.

In support of this process, I wish to briefly state the position of my Government on a few of the issues raised. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bhutan fully subscribes to the Movement's stated positions on the question of Security Council reform and expansion. We believe that expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories is imperative. Expansion in the membership of both categories must be responsive to the changed global political and economic climate. Equally essential is the adequate representation, both as permanent and non-permanent members, of developing countries, which have long endured unjust marginalization within the Council.

With regard to the creation of rotating permanent seats, my delegation believes that decisions on such modalities must be arrived at within regional groups. We understand and respect the prerogative of the African Group to pursue this model, but believe that the same may not necessarily be suitable for all other regions. Bhutan is also concerned that such an arrangement could create complex strata of hierarchy within the Council, leading to greater dissatisfaction among members.

Bhutan recognizes that the question of the veto is intrinsically linked to the issue of expansion of the Council. In fact, it lies at the very heart of much of our discussions and cannot be de-linked from the issue of reform and expansion of the Council. We fully share the views of the Non-Aligned Movement that the veto should be curtailed with a view to its elimination and that the Charter should be amended so that initially the veto power would only apply to actions taken under Chapter VII. However, the reality is that any proposal on the veto may be subject to the veto itself. Thus, for the interim, it is our view that new permanent members of the Council should be entitled to the same rights and privileges enjoyed by the current five permanent members. Consequently, we would be unable to support any attempts that would lead to further stratification of the Council's membership.

While Bhutan is flexible on the exact size of an expanded Council, we support the view that total membership should be increased by no less than 11. It is

clear that developing countries today lack adequate representation in the permanent category of Council members. The expansion should therefore address this grave inadequacy and accommodate the demands of under-represented regional groups.

All these aspects should be subject to periodic review in the future, in order to ensure the Council's continued relevance. We are convinced that the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform and expansion is the appropriate forum for consideration of these matters. Both cluster I and cluster II issues should continue to be considered in tandem.

My delegation is confident that under your leadership, Mr. President, and with the demonstrated competence of the distinguished co-Vice-Chairmen, discussions will proceed in conformity with relevant Assembly resolutions, fully respecting the need for transparency and open-endedness. We look forward to contributing to the process.

We realize that the debate on this issue has been protracted and difficult. It is often said that change, no matter how positive, is always accompanied by some pain and discomfort. We hope the Working Group will have the courage to surmount these difficulties in order to make real progress in the coming year.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to offer our warmest thanks to you, Sir, for giving us the opportunity to take part in a debate that is important for most delegations. The best proof of this is the length of the list of speakers. It was not long ago that my delegation last addressed the various issues we are covering today; therefore we will try to be very brief.

In the Open-ended Working Group we will participate actively in the discussion regarding the equitable distribution of Security Council seats and the expansion of its membership. The Working Group is the best forum for putting on the table all issues relating to Council reform because it will the opportunity and all the time needed to debate these issues with the greatest objectivity and transparency.

The reform of the Security Council is a subject of importance for all delegations. We live under new circumstances and we have a new world order. We need to see the principle of equity applied to the Security Council. This is extremely important for all the States Members of the United Nations.

More than half a century has passed since the Security Council was established. It is necessary to pause and review its various decisions and resolutions. There are many gaps and imbalances in the work of the Council as compared with the ideal role we would like it to play. We should realize that many countries have gained independence and have become Members of the United Nations, thereby forming an overwhelming majority. This is in addition to the end of the cold war. Therefore, the Security Council must provide equitable representation to all such States.

I would like to repeat here, without going into detail, that my delegation supports the view of the Group of Arab States in this regard. This is a position that we have explained in meetings of the Open-ended Working Group. We also support the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represents the majority of the Member States of this Organization.

In addressing the issue of the reform of the United Nations system we have to conform above all to the principle of absolute transparency. In order to be successful, reform of the Security Council must occur in an atmosphere of transparency. It is important that all debates be characterized by transparency. Indeed, transparency is the best tool and format for expressing the views of all States without discrimination. My delegation would therefore like to reassert the importance of upholding the principles of transparency and democracy in debating reform of the Security Council.

Many peoples have suffered as a result of the exercise of the veto power. This power goes against the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Aiming at establishing democracy and transparency in the work of the Council, we call for a limitation of the power of the veto to matters that fall under Chapter VII, with a view to the eventual elimination of the veto altogether.

We hope that all interested States will take part in the serious work of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council in view of the importance of the subject. We would not continue to live with a Damoclean sword hanging over our heads. There is a need for very lengthy discussions, which are best carried out within the Open-ended Working Group.

Before concluding, I would like to reassert that any reform process should be full, complete and unanimous. I would also like to reassert that my delegation will

cooperate with you, Mr. President, and will contribute in a positive way to the work of the Working Group.

Mr. ul-Haque (Pakistan): Discussions on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters are in their seventh year, and therefore it would be useful to take stock.

Our deliberations over all these years have established beyond any shadow of a doubt that there are deep and abiding differences among the membership on a host of issues, including permanent membership, the use of the veto and the total membership of the Security Council. There are many issues that I would have liked to take up today, but due to the constraints of time I will confine myself to recapitulating briefly our perceptions of only a few aspects of this complex subject.

Pakistan believes that the reform of the Security Council is a cardinal issue of major political and strategic significance for the international community. We are of the view that the membership of the United Nations, which works to promote democracy, participation, transparency and accountability in the world, must be animated by the same principles in deciding upon the issues relating to the membership and the work of the Council. Our objective must be the evolution of a transparent, democratic and effective Security Council that enjoys the support and confidence of the membership of the United Nations.

There are a few countries which appear to believe that the only yardstick by which progress on this issue can be measured is the achievement of their ambition to become a permanent member of the Council. It is from this perspective alone that they would like to judge the outcome of this whole exercise. In their view, if they are not anointed as permanent members, progress has not been and cannot be made. Their desire to seek permanent status on the Council is not motivated by altruistic or noble sentiments. It is an undisguised grab for power and privilege.

That is the crux of the problem. The international community is being asked to embrace the so-called new realities, and on the coat-tails of these new realities ride other aspirants, who hope to slip into the permanent category of the membership of the Council through genuflection to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Countries which aspire to permanent membership perhaps believe that they are in some way superior to the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations and that they have a distinctive, different and elevated position. We would like to disabuse them of this notion. The United Nations was created on the basis of the sovereign equality of all States. In the new millennium, the General Assembly cannot be expected to bestow special privileges on some while denying them to the vast majority of nations.

Pakistan firmly believes that the expansion and reform of the Security Council must be based on the principle of the greater good of the entire membership of the United Nations and that all of us must work to eliminate the discriminatory and anti-democratic features of the Security Council instead of strengthening them further. We cannot accept the creation of new and additional centres of power and privilege in the Council to the exclusion of the overwhelming majority of the membership of the Organization. In our view, the concept of permanent membership is inherently discriminatory and goes against the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States. We must not repeat the mistake made at the time of the establishment of the United Nations, when the victorious Allied Powers secured permanent seats on the Council. The addition of more permanent members would make the Council neither more democratic and representative, nor more transparent and efficient. It would make it more undemocratic, unrepresentative and unresponsive to the concerns of the vast majority.

To put it simply, Pakistan is against any increase in the category of permanent members. Such an increase would serve only to accommodate the interests and ambitions of a few countries and would restrict the participation of the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations in the Council's work. Allow me to note that it is the small and medium-sized countries which constitute the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly. It is they that must be given greater representation in the decision-making processes of the Council, and not those few who seek pelf, prestige, privilege and power to promote their own agendas.

Pakistan is against the creation of a new oligarchy designed to protect and promote the interests of a small number of powerful States. It is ironic that countries which preach democratic values, equality, transparency and full participation in decision-making at the national level reverse themselves and became very vocal in defence of anti-democratic formulas when it comes to promoting their own parochial interests at the United Nations.

The vast majority of the membership has expressed support for the idea that the veto should be eliminated or that, at the very least its use should be limited to decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter. We share the position of the Non-Aligned Movement calling for the eventual elimination of the veto. However, any curtailment of the veto power continues to be opposed by those who enjoy or wish to acquire this power.

The issue of veto is, therefore, intrinsically linked to the reform and expansion of the Security Council. Pakistan believes that the veto power is undemocratic and archaic. It was acquired by a few Member States at the time of the framing of the Charter, when they were basking in the glory of a great victory. However, history is witness to the fact that the veto has invariably been used to protect the political or strategic interests of the veto-wielding Powers. Permanent members have used or threatened to use the veto to block Council decisions on innumerable occasions. The veto has never been used and, by its very nature, can never be used, to promote solutions to problems.

In today's world, no country, however strong or powerful, should be allowed to arrogate to itself the right to veto decisions which it finds unpalatable. While, because of the provisions written into the Charter, it may not be possible to eliminate the veto, the General Assembly, after witnessing for more than half a century initiatives for peace and security being stifled time and again by the use of veto, cannot be expected to create additional obstacles to the effective functioning of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security by adding to the number of veto-wielding countries.

I should note that substantial progress has been recorded over the last few years. For instance, there is general agreement on an increase in the category of non-permanent members of the Security Council. In this connection, I would like to recall the eminently reasonable position of the Non-Aligned Movement that, in the event there can be no agreement on other categories, there should be expansion only in the non-permanent membership for the time being. That, in our view, is the only viable option, and it would also be in keeping with the principle of the sovereign equality of all States and would meet the requirements of equitable geographical distribution.

An increase in the non-permanent category would help remove the major grievances of the general membership at the lack of opportunity to participate in and contribute to the work of the Council. The membership of the United Nations has risen enormously while the size of the Council has remained frozen since 1965. I may mention that in the Asian Group, candidatures for non-permanent seats in the Council have already been announced up to the years 2018-19. This is not merely reflective of the desire of Member States to serve as members of the Council; it underlines the fact that they rarely get an opportunity to do so. This desire, shared by the vast majority of countries, is being held hostage to the selfish and unfair demands of those few who are determined to push for permanent seats on the Council for themselves.

Consensus also largely exists on the need to make the working methods and practices of the Security Council transparent, democratic and participatory. There is considerable scope for making progress in this area.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed efforts by those who are eager to win glory for themselves to find some "quick-fix" formulas for the expansion of the Security Council. This has led at times to the unfortunate practice of conducting negotiations and discussions among a select few, to the exclusion of the large majority of delegations. As a result, we have had to witness many acrimonious exchanges.

Our future consideration of the issues related to the reform and expansion of the Security Council must therefore continue to be based on an open and transparent discussion in the Open-ended Working Group established by the General Assembly. There can be no "quick fixes" or partial solutions to meet self-imposed or artificial deadlines. This subject is vital to all of us, collectively as well as individually.

Mr. President, we are all your friends. We are all ready to help you. We are counting on you to ensure that all Member States participate in the process on an equal footing and that small-group meetings are not organized under the patronage of the presidency, in informal settings, to evolve decisions. Such attempts have not succeeded in the past and, if revived, are bound to fail again.

Pakistan will continue to engage actively in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group when it meets next year. We favour the holding of a general debate in the Working Group, which would allow delegations, including mine, to elaborate on their views at greater length on many of the issues that have not been touched upon in this Hall.

The task ahead of you, Mr. President, is both complex and difficult. However, we are confident that with your wisdom, tact and diplomatic skills you will be able to steer our work clear of past pitfalls. We must move collectively towards the goal of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council, in a manner which is acceptable to and serves the interests of all Member States, particularly the weak and the vulnerable countries, which form the vast majority of the membership and for which the United Nations is the court of last appeal.

Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea): Reform of the Security Council, like reform of the United Nations as a whole, is one of the top-priority tasks that the international community has been mandated to carry out during the last decade of the twentieth century. As we stand today in the twilight of the century, we cannot but express disappointment and frustration at what little progress we have made over the last six years.

Now that we are about to cross into the twenty-first century, however, we believe that the United Nations is once again called upon to persevere and to make further serious efforts in pursuit of a general agreement on reform of the Security Council, especially since such reform will have a crucial impact on the future of the United Nations and the shaping of the international order in the coming century.

Having said that, let me reflect upon several of the fundamental issues on which any reform of the Security Council will have to be based.

The overarching goal, in our view, remains unchanged: the enhancement of democratic representation, accountability and efficiency in the Security Council. It is true that democratic representation of all 188 Members on the Security Council can be enhanced only by enlarging the membership of the Council, and a consensus seems to have emerged at least on this key point.

Despite intensive deliberations for the last six years, however, there has been no consensus as yet on an expansion package involving such issues as categories and total size of the enlarged Council, qualifications and modalities for the selection of the new membership and the system of periodic review. Enlargement still remains an indispensable component of our overall task, calling for an extra dose of creativity.

With respect to the issue of categories and size of the Council, it is imperative that we ensure, on the one hand, that all Member States be given a fair opportunity to serve on the Council with reasonable frequency, commensurate with their capabilities — actual and potential — to contribute to international peace and security and their willingness to do so.

On the other hand, regardless of whether or when the international community will be able to find optimal answers to the many unresolved questions of permanent membership, we are still prepared to go ahead, for the time being, with the expansion of the non-permanent membership. Non-permanency through periodic elections by definition better guarantees democratic representation on the Security Council.

We also believe that the additional non-permanent seats should be distributed on a more equitable geographical basis. We should take into account all relevant factors, including the evolving geography within each regional group in the post-cold-war era. Given the recent enlargement of the Asian Group membership and its vast geographical coverage, the Asian Group deserves special consideration in the composition of an expanded Council.

Consensus also appears to have emerged on the need for greater transparency in the work of the Security Council, which would certainly imbue the Council with greater democracy and accountability. It would also, in turn, encourage the majority of United Nations Member States to render their full support and contributions to the work of the Council through more active participation. My delegation notes with satisfaction that the Security Council has recently made significant strides in the area of transparency by holding more open briefings and meetings.

For our part, my delegation, in cooperation with other non-permanent members of the Council, took a joint initiative in December 1997 to put forward a number of practical suggestions for transparency measures. These suggestions, along with other views that emerged in the course of the follow-up discussions, are reflected in a conference room paper prepared by the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the working methods of the Security Council and the transparency of its work as well as its decision-making process, contained in document A/53/47.

We remain convinced that, contrary to what many people believe, transparency is not necessarily detrimental to efficiency. In fact, the two can be mutually reinforcing if managed effectively. We should therefore continue to seek parallel and balanced progress on both fronts in the work of the Council.

Let me now turn to the sensitive issue of the decision-making process of the Security Council. It has been my Government's consistent position that the number of veto-holders must not be enlarged. The veto was indeed an exception to the principle of sovereign equality in the special circumstances that prevailed after the Second World War. Even in this post-cold-war era, we have witnessed vetoes' preventing the Council from responding promptly to situations in which its action was required. In our view, the veto power should not be expanded, but rather rationalized.

My delegation also attaches particular importance to the issue of the periodic review of the composition of the Council after its enlargement. Periodic review, to be meaningful, should be undertaken in a substantive manner within a reasonable time-frame.

In conclusion, I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session in his capacity as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group and to his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador De Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Dahlgren of Sweden, for their excellent leadership in guiding the Working Group during the past year.

My delegation also entertains high expectations, Sir, that next year's session of the Open-ended Working Group will reap fruitful results under your prominent and skilful leadership; indeed, we are all counting on you in this respect. May I assure you of my delegation's commitment and willingness to cooperate with you to make the work of the upcoming session of the Working Group as constructive and fruitful as possible.

Ms. Ramiro Lopez (Philippines): If the Security Council is to remain relevant and effective in addressing international challenges, its capacity to meet them must be enhanced in accordance with present-day realities. It is for this reason that the issue of the reform of the Security Council has been our common interest and remains in the forefront of our agenda.

The position of my delegation on this issue is well known. We would like the Security Council itself, with its wide mandate and leadership role, to be at the centre of change and reform. It should be representative, democratic, transparent and accountable.

The Philippines desires to have an expansion of the Security Council among non-permanent and permanent members alike. The Security Council has not changed and has remained small, unrepresentative and undemocratic despite the increase in United Nations membership to 188 Member States. The gross under-representation of developing countries in the Council is a perfect proof of a deplorable lacuna which needs to be addressed promptly.

The notion of rotating permanent seats is interesting. However, a number of technically and politically difficult issues have to be addressed. For example, the term of each seat and the manner of election, among other things, would have to be worked out. Rotating permanent members without the veto would be no different than non-permanent members that, in effect, rotate every two years. However, the implication of giving the veto to every rotating permanent member, which would create the possibility for every United Nations Member to wield a veto, has to be studied by the Working Group.

As regards the question of additional categories of membership, the idea of creating seats for more frequently rotating non-permanent members is interesting but may not be feasible or may be difficult to implement. It would also create further inequalities within the Council.

The Philippines considers the issue of reform of the veto power to be one of the most enduring and controversial questions before the United Nations. The question of the enlargement of the Council is intrinsically linked to the question of the veto. Our interest in addressing this question goes back over two decades, when the Philippines proposed, among other things, that the unanimity requirement among permanent members be circumscribed. The veto, short of abolition, should be curtailed and rationalized.

In its work on the question of the veto, the Philippines reiterates its proposal that the following considerations be taken into account by the Working Group:

First, the view has been expressed by certain delegations in previous discussions on the veto to the effect that many situations in the Council no longer

address the direct national interests of the veto-holders and are not perceived as having the potential to lead to conflict between the major Powers. There is really no need for the veto most of the time.

Secondly, other sources of tension — such as human rights, economic disputes and the environment, as well as intrastate, as opposed to inter-State, conflicts — are increasingly considered to be factors directly affecting international peace and security. Hence, the consequences and ramifications of Security Council actions or non-action caused by a veto will certainly expand beyond what they were under a more restrictive definition of international peace and security and ultimately affect, for better or worse, the role and perception of the Security Council as the United Nations organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. More circumspect use and application of the veto in the context of an expanding Council mandate and definition of international peace and security are an issue which must be taken into account by our Working Group.

Thirdly, we subscribe to the notion that a truly reformed United Nations requires, among other things, greater balance or sharing of responsibilities among United Nations organs in accordance with their respective mandates, particularly between the General Assembly, which has the most comprehensive mandate of any United Nations organ, and the Security Council, due to the growing number of factors now deemed to affect international peace and security and the need for broader-based decision-making based on democratic principles. These are matters we feel the Security Council should be willing to share, in terms of decision-making, with the General Assembly, particularly through the non-use of the veto.

As to the question of extending the veto power to any additional permanent members, the Philippines, in principle, believes that the permanent members should be given the veto power. Otherwise, there would be two categories of permanent members: those with the veto and those without. Nevertheless, my Government hopes that an agreement to limit the veto power will be reached and made applicable to all permanent members, old and new.

The Philippines believes that there should be a periodic review of an enlarged Security Council, which should take place at agreed intervals. The scope should include all matters related to the Council's work, particularly to make its decision-making process more inclusive and transparent. Additional membership could also be considered.

It is the firm view of the Government of the Philippines that a comprehensive package should consist of both expansion and reform elements. Improving the transparency of the Council's working methods and enhancing the participation of non-members in its decision-making process is just as important as increasing its membership.

Six years after the establishment of the Working Group, we are confronted with the same situation with regard to our work, which seems to bring about some degree of despair and frustration. Maybe we should reflect and ask ourselves how our frequent responses of omission have contributed to this sense of frustration.

The United Nations has accomplished many tasks that have seemed impossible at times. Among these is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on which the United Nations laboured for many, many years. But these agreements have seen the light of day through our perseverance and commitment, so maybe there is hope for our work. Surely our common needs and common longings for peace can transcend our differences in perspective and practice.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): The United States strongly supports the ongoing effort to strengthen the Security Council and to enable it to enhance its ability to respond efficiently and effectively to the challenges and opportunities of the new millennium. Council reform will help ensure that the Council more accurately reflects the world's current political, economic and security situation. A reformed Council, viewed as more representative by the States Members of the United Nations, will enjoy enhanced legitimacy as it exercises the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security conferred by the United Nations Charter.

The difficulty we face in attempting to reach consensus on a framework for Security Council reform should not surprise us. The magnitude of the Council's responsibilities and the complexity of the issues with which it is confronted are mirrored in the complexity and scope of the issues directly related to Council reform. Often, these complex and interrelated issues pull in opposing directions, making a workable consensus elusive. For example, the Open-ended Working Group must balance the legitimate desire for greater

representation with the equally compelling need to preserve the Council's ability to react decisively to fast-breaking challenges to international peace and security. The Council is, after all, a quasi-executive body. This is no easy task and we should not pretend that it is.

The fact that all the hard work over the years in the Open-ended Working Group has yet to reach closure is ample testimony to the complex nature of the problem. That having been said, the admitted difficulty of this task cannot be permitted to serve either as an excuse for lessening our shared commitment to reform or for accepting an ill-considered or partial solution merely to bring the work of the Open-ended Working Group to an end. For any issue of fundamental importance to the United Nations — and in our view, Security Council reform clearly qualifies as such an issue — our guiding principle must be: do it right.

The United States believes that the inability of the Open-ended Working Group to reach agreement on a framework for Council reform is not the result of disagreement over any one particular element of the overall reform issue. Nor is it the result of any one member's national position. Likewise, we do not believe that a change in any individual country's position would suddenly yield a clear path to consensus. There are still a number of unresolved issues and mutually incompatible national and regional bloc positions. We believe that attempting to identify a single source for the lack of consensus is fruitless and counterproductive, and serves only to distract the attention of the Working Group from its real and important work.

Without repeating our national position in detail, I should like to say that the United States remains committed to expanding the size of the Council and supports the inclusion of Japan, Germany and representative States from the African, Asian and Latin American regional groups as permanent members. We remain unconvinced that a Council expanded beyond 21 members would retain its ability to function efficiently and effectively. We will oppose any expansion that threatens the ability of the Council to carry out its responsibilities under the Charter. The gravity of those responsibilities is simply too great to risk compromising the Council's ability to meet them.

The United States believes that the future efforts of the Open-ended Working Group might be more productive if they were redirected to include and, perhaps, even to emphasize a more thorough and analytical examination of the possible operations of an expanded Council. Of course, to be meaningful and useful, such an analysis would have to consider different size and composition possibilities for the Council. The United States would, naturally, be willing to be an active and engaged participant in that effort.

Finally, the United States views the strengthening of the Council as only one element — albeit a critical one — in the larger process of strengthening the United Nations in its entirety. We will also continue our efforts to increase the overall efficiency of the United Nations, to limit its financial dependence on a small number of Members and to support the Secretary-General's ongoing reform efforts. Much has already been accomplished, but much remains to be done.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): Our present-day world is going through a period that remains unstable and uncertain. Everything should be done to build a solid basis and new foundations that can ensure peace and promote the development of all the countries of the world. From that standpoint, it is essential that the United Nations be reformed so that it can function well and be able to fulfil its role and attain its objectives.

It is here, in the United Nations, where, in accordance with the principle of the sovereign equality of States, all countries have equal status. It is also here in the United Nations that we advocate the principles of the non-use of force or the threat of force against the independence and sovereignty of States, of the peaceful settlement of disputes and of non-interference in the internal affairs of others. In our opinion, a strong, representative and truly democratic United Nations would enjoy the support, backing and, above all, confidence of all its Member States, including weak and needy countries.

In discussing United Nations reform, it is impossible to ignore the delicate work being done by the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. For more than six years, we have been examining the different aspects of the restructuring of the Council — the principle body for the maintenance of international peace and security. To our delegation's regret, the objective of arriving at a global agreement on the sensitive issues — the expansion, composition and working methods of the Council — has not yet been achieved. Nevertheless, we must not give in to discouragement, as Council reform represents a fundamental element of the overall reform of

our Organization and this exercise remains one of the most difficult and complex.

Our position on this issue is known. It has been reaffirmed on many occasions here in the General Assembly as well as in the Open-ended Working Group. Laos is in favour of an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members. With regard to new permanent members, we believe, on the basis of current global realities, that two should come from the industrialized countries and three from the developing countries. We believe that such a formula, while it does not yet have the support of all, could nevertheless provide a basis for discussion in our work in coming years.

As to the increase in the number of non-permanent members, we feel that the idea that Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe should each be represented in the new expanded Security Council is interesting and that, like many other formulas, it deserves more thorough consideration.

In the effort to reform the Council, like the other members of the Non-Aligned Movement, we are in favour of transparency in the working methods of the Council. In our view, such transparency, especially in the Council's decision-making process, would allow us all to understand the reasoning behind the decisions taken by the Council and thereby help the Council to earn the trust of all States Members of the Organization.

As we are all aware, this question of Council reform is not a simple one. We must be patient, pursue discussion and, above all, exploit the dynamics we have created. In the end, we believe that, together, we can attain the ultimate goal of restructuring the Council by giving it greater transparency, legitimacy and, above all, credibility.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the current plenary session of the General Assembly and to the opportunity to discuss one of the key and most complex issues that directly affect not only the prospects for the United Nations development, but also the issues of the future structure of the architecture of world security. We consider such discussions to be a principal element of the process of reform of one of the main organs of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Six years ago, when they began actively to work on Security Council reform, the States Members of the United Nations very clearly laid down the structure and institutional framework for discussions. We are not inclined to share the opinion of certain Member States that these were years of fruitless discussion. As we take stock of the twentieth century, this year has shown that the scale and responsibility of tasks facing the United Nations objectively affect the profile of the Security Council. Over the past year, we have witnessed an unprecedented number of open meetings of the Council that, a few years ago, would have been quite unthinkable.

Clearly, any increase in the transparency of the work of the Council will gradually draw an ever-larger number of States into the process of discussing important issues. Only yesterday, it would have seemed unrealistic to expect the substantive summaries of and short briefings on the work of the Council on an Internet web site that were successfully introduced into the Council's practices this year. We should therefore welcome the enhanced substantive daily briefings by the President of the Council and the positive experience of the monthly presidential assessment of the work of the Security Council, to the benefit of its member delegations.

In our view, such positive trends have undoubtedly countered the negative developments in Kosovo, determined the historical role of the United Nations in the independence process of East Timor and helped the Organization to achieve a deeper understanding of and reach effective solutions to the problems of Africa. We must not underestimate these positive trends in the evolution of the Council's work.

However, the evolutionary process in the working methods of the Council should not be cause for self-congratulation. It is an indisputable and widely acknowledged fact that the Security Council is inadequate to the main challenges and geopolitical realities of the contemporary world. This issue is as relevant as ever and is gradually becoming a key to the further evolution of the United Nations. It has become perfectly clear today that, without decisive measures and actions to reform the Council, the universal mechanism for peacekeeping, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict reconstruction will grow ever less functional.

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus therefore calls for renewed consideration of all the results of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council and for the drafting of a concrete

programme of urgent action to determine the basic parameters of reform, especially those relating to the quantitative structure of the Council. One of the key elements of this work could be the holding of special open ministerial meetings of the Council devoted to this issue. The most suitable timing for convening such a meeting would be during the general political debate at the millennial session. The delegation of the Republic of Belarus has often noted the potential usefulness of such a meeting.

The position of the Government of Belarus on the questions of Security Council reform is sufficiently clear. Above all, without prejudice to the effectiveness of that organ, we need to ensure equitable geographic representation of Governments in the new structure of the Council, including representatives of the Eastern Europe Group. Undeniably, the developing countries, especially those in Africa, require equitable and adequate representation in the Council's membership. To this end, we assume that any expansion should occur in both categories of Council membership.

In the course of earlier discussion, we have heard rational proposals on the further improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, which the Republic of Belarus supports. This would involve above all an increase in the number of open meetings; the Egyptian proposal that the Council submit reports on its work not only on an annual basis, but also on more immediate issues of its work; the suggestion of Iran on daily press releases on the Council's consultations; and the Indian initiative concerning the Council's preparations of its assessment of its substantive activities.

Special attention needs to be accorded to the question of the veto and other voting procedures. We believe that the right of veto — a powerful decision-making instrument of the cold-war era — should be comprehensively examined.

We are now 11 days from an important threshold in the history of humanity. Will the year 2000 mark a smooth transition to peace and stability, or will the world veer sharply towards civil wars and confrontation? The answer to that question is directly related to the subject under consideration today. The delegation of Belarus is fully resolved to work actively to achieve material progress in Security Council reform.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia attaches great importance to the general debate on this issue, which is of such great significance for Member States. My delegation also eagerly awaits the recommencement of the work of the Open-ended Working Group.

I wish to highlight four essential elements that, in my delegation's opinion, should constitute for this General Assembly, the basis for our consideration of the issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We will address other critical matters during the general debate that we believe will take place during the sessions of the Working Group.

The accomplishments and limitations of the Security Council are the starting point of our deliberations in the Working Group. Once again the international situation has reminded us that the Organization should not and cannot avoid a real reform of the Security Council. The reform should improve the quality of the Council's decisions and restore legitimacy to this body through an equitable expansion. In particular, the situation in Kosovo has demonstrated that whenever the preponderant Powers avoid the Security Council they compromise the authority of this United Nations organ as the main guarantor of peace and international security. Insisting on de facto reforms in an organ that bases its legitimacy on universal representation dangerously jeopardizes the fundamental principles established in the Charter.

The Working Group must delve into the issue of the veto. It is inadvisable to attempt to reform the composition of the Security Council without dealing in depth with the question of the veto. Recurrent threats to use the veto are what has made this discussion more necessary. As the management of the situation in Kosovo demonstrated, this behaviour has become the main obstacle to the Security Council taking timely decisions to deal with crises.

The Working Group, therefore, must try to resolve two basic considerations. First, what justifies the existence of the veto? Secondly, how is it possible to channel the wishes of the more than 180 Member States that would like to see the veto modified or curtailed?

After six years of deliberations it is clear that there is no consensus on the expansion of the Security Council in the category of permanent members. What is interesting is an emerging tendency in our deliberations

in the course of those years to favour an increase in the number of non-permanent members. The final result of the reform would be disappointing if it were to increase the existing inequalities in representation of developed and developing countries, as well as the existing inequalities in the representation among the developing countries. In order to avoid these inequalities it necessary to strictly respect the dynamics of each region as well as their own proposals for participation.

We will give due consideration to the lessons learned from the work of the Open-ended Working Group during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. Allow me to highlight some of the things we learned. First, we confirmed that the Working Group is the appropriate, necessary and positive setting to discuss and negotiate, with transparency, matters of Security Council reform among all Member States. Secondly, an intense, productive and thorough debate taught us that informal consultations would not have a strong impact on the dynamics of our discussions at this stage, and that thus they could be omitted. Thirdly, we saw that the creativity and originality of the Bureau and especially the President can motivate a greater number of delegations to participate in the deliberations. Finally, we reiterate our conviction that transparency is the essence of trust.

Institutionalization is a very serious matter. It is a decision of a moment that has lasting consequences. Naturally some countries with greater power wish to institutionalize their power in the Organization, just as others want to be included in the club of the powerful. This is rational behaviour, and it is the most intelligent way of perpetuating international power structures. Nonetheless, it is also natural, in a democratic international community based on the principles of equitable geographic representation and the sovereign equality of States, that changes to the collective security system be the result of a genuine general agreement, instead of being imposed. Whatever we do today must be sufficiently visionary to allow for rapid adjustments to the changing realities of the international system and its distribution of power.

Therefore my delegation reiterates that our discussions must take as long as is necessary to build a general agreement, which certainly will be built. A great deal of the credibility of the United Nations is in the hands of the Working Group. It is important, therefore, that we have the opportunity of a general debate when you, Sir, convene the Group. If we allow States to express their views in depth during the meetings of the Working Group, we will see that, in spite of the differences, there are no good or bad positions, but simply national positions.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In the aftermath of the serious tests of the Iraq and Balkan crises, restoration of the Security Council as the main organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security has become a core task within the overall strengthening of the authority and global role of the United Nations. An overwhelming majority of Member States stressed this during the general debate of the current General Assembly session. The main inference to be drawn from this discussion is that the search for solutions to the most acute international problems should take place solely within the legal framework of the United Nations and be based on respect for the Charter and for the Security Council's prerogatives as stipulated therein. It goes without saying that commitment to comply with the Charter — in deeds, not in words — is the main requirement for any candidate for Security Council membership.

The search for a generally acceptable and viable formula to improve the Council's composition and work while preserving and enhancing its effectiveness has acquired particular importance with regard to situations where there is resort to unilateral use of force, bypassing the Council. The Security Council, reinforced and generally supported by the Member States, is a reliable guarantor against the arbitrary rule of force in global affairs.

On the basis of experience accumulated in the Open-ended Working Group set up by the General Assembly we should proceed with our painstaking efforts to narrow national positions on the key issues of Security Council enlargement in order to reach the broadest possible agreement on this most crucial problem. There should be no artificially imposed time-frames for this endeavour.

The Russian Federation continues to believe that the number of members in an enlarged Security Council should not exceed 20 or 21. We are still convinced that exceeding that limit would have a negative impact on the efficiency of the Council's activities. Within that limit we are open to discussion of any proposals on membership categories for an enlargement of the Council. Our principal position remains unchanged: the enlargement in either membership category should include both industrialized nations and developing countries, and both groups must be ensured the same status. We are convinced that this is absolutely indispensable for

maintaining an overall balance in international relations to uphold the principles of a multipolar world order. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) actions in the Kosovo crisis only strengthened our firm belief that there is no alternative to such an approach to Security Council enlargement.

In this context, for instance, the Russian Federation considers India a strong and worthy candidate for permanent membership in the Security Council should it be decided to enlarge the Council in both categories. There are also strong candidates from Latin America and Africa.

In principle, the Russian Federation does not object to the idea of States occupying new permanent positions on the basis of rotation. Provided that such a formula gains the necessary support, the specific modalities for its application should be considered by the relevant regional groups. As for extending the right of veto to possible new permanent members, a decision in that regard should be taken only after the concrete composition of the enlarged Security Council has been agreed upon.

An inevitable prerequisite for such agreement is the maintenance by the incumbent permanent members of the Security Council of their current status. We flatly reject the thesis that basic principle of the Charter — the concurring votes of the five permanent members — leads to a virtual paralysis of the Council. That thesis distorts reality and plays into the hands of those who advocate the use of military force, sidestepping the Security Council, whether under humanitarian or any other pretexts. The veto has proved to be an irreplaceable tool to ensure that the Council's work is coordinated and that it is able to arrive at balanced decisions within its framework.

The Open-ended Working Group will continue to give serious consideration to the issue of the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. Pragmatism and a rational approach are the best guides in this respect. The measures that have already been taken by the Council should be adequately appraised and a collective effort made to increase their practical effect. The proposed new steps must be effective and commensurate with the task of enhancing the efficiency of the Council.

The Russian Federation will continue to make a constructive contribution to the deliberations of the Working Group so that broad agreement can be reached. Such agreement will be necessary if the issue of Security Council enlargement is to be practically resolved in a way that can withstand the test of time.

Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria): Let me first thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on item 38. The Bulgarian delegation attaches great importance to the question of Security Council reform and welcomes your willingness to dedicate to it a number of plenary meetings in one of the Assembly's busiest weeks before the conclusion of the main part of its present session. Bulgaria is one of those Member States that do not themselves stand to gain from the reform. Nevertheless, we are willing to contribute to the improvement in the way in which this Organization works and would like to see its role in world affairs restored and strengthened.

In the Open-ended Working Group, my delegation has repeatedly expressed its views on the various aspects of the reform. Therefore, I will confine myself to providing a brief reminder of our positions.

Bulgaria would favour an expansion of the Security Council in both categories as a more adequate way of reflecting the changes in the world since the end of the Second World War. The expansion by five additional seats, in both the permanent and non-permanent membership, bringing the total number of members to the mid-twenties, would restore balance and would add more credibility and legitimacy to Council decisions. One of the additional non-permanent seats should be allocated to the Eastern European regional Group, bringing its total number of non-permanent seats in an expanded Council to two. I would like to point out that, in the view of this delegation, introducing into our debate ideas for additional categories of membership is not productive, as it dilutes and complicates the reform exercise.

We believe that the curtailment of the use of the veto is essential for the effectiveness of the Security Council's work and that this can be achieved without introducing amendments to the Charter. Permanent members of the Council should be mindful of the fact that they are acting on behalf of the Organization as a whole and should exercise the veto only when they consider the issue in question to be of vital importance. With regard to the application of the veto, a number of exclusion clauses should be agreed upon and applied. The future new members of the Council should be entitled to the same prerogatives as the present permanent members, including a curtailed right of veto. It is encouraging in this respect that during the debate in the Working Group, the aspirant countries joined their voices to the appeal for a more restricted use of the veto.

Bulgaria fully subscribes to the opinion that a periodic review of the Security Council's decision-making process is a vital tool for accountability and for ensuring responsible performance. The review process should be transparent and comprehensive, addressing all elements of the Council's activities.

Finally, after a six-year debate in the Working Group, we are convinced that it is high time for all of us to try to bridge the existing gap that prevents us from making tangible progress. Our delegation is ready to contribute to any initiative credibly aimed at laying the grounds for a possible compromise. We encourage the President of the General Assembly to proceed both with the debate in the Working Group and with informal consultations, especially with the permanent members of the Council and groups of like-minded countries. He can count on our support in this endeavour.

In conclusion, let me express, on behalf of the delegation of Bulgaria, our appreciation for the activities of the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform and of its Chairman, Mr. Didier Opertti, and Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Hans Dahlgren and Ambassador John de Saram, for their devotion and the remarkable manner in which they have conducted the deliberations of the Working Group.

Mr. Mbaya (Kenya): I acknowledge the opening remarks by the President, and thank him for convening this plenary meeting to continue the dialogue and debate on the reform of the Security Council.

It is now more than six years since the General Assembly started considering the issue of the reform of the Security Council. Many delegations have articulated their positions during that period, and the various positions are therefore very well known by now. My delegation is convinced that the time has come for the General Assembly to engage in more in-depth and frank negotiations on this issue. In their contribution to the debate, the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group have made concrete proposals in an effort to move the process forward. The time has come for the others to do so.

My delegation was heartened by the decision, expressed by the President in his introductory remarks, to let this debate go on, despite the apparent slow progress. We commend him for that decision. My delegation is also encouraged by his undertaking to allow the Working Group to continue with its work early in the year 2000. On that score, too, he has my delegation's full support.

An analysis of the work of the Security Council in the last 10 years clearly demonstrates the urgent need for reform. The different responses by the Council to situations in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Somalia, Sierra Leone and East Timor, to name a few, expose the inadequacies in the Council's present structure and working methods. We continue to witness a situation in which the authority of the Security Council is gradually being eroded. Yet there is no evidence of action from within the Council itself, or, indeed, from the United Nations membership, to address this problem. This development could lead to the weakening of the very system that has maintained international peace and security for the past 50 years.

My delegation is of the view that any reform of the Security Council should take into account the diverse character of the United Nations membership and consequently reflect an equitable geographical representation. It is a serious anomaly, for example, that Africa, with 53 member countries, has no permanent seat on the Council, even though the continent provides nearly one third of the United Nations membership.

Africa's position on the reform of the Security Council was formulated by the heads of State at the 1993 Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Cairo, where they categorically called for the expansion of the Security Council by at least 11 seats. My delegation fully supports this position and reiterates that Africa must have two permanent and five non-permanent seats in the Council.

In an attempt to ensure a speedy reform of the Security Council and recognizing the difficulties involved in the ongoing negotiations, the Non-Aligned Movement has come up with a position that would in the meantime ensure a horizontal expansion of the Council. We hope that this position will receive support from all those delegations that have committed themselves to a Security Council for the twenty-first century — a Security Council that is transparent, reflective of the principles of democracy and which espouses the values of fair play and respect for the membership of the Organization.

On the question of the veto, we cannot do better than to recall the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, which reiterates our commitment to actively promote its curtailment by limiting its use to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter. We wish to reiterate that, if the veto has to be retained in any shape or form, the

privilege must be extended to all new members without discrimination.

We welcome the progress made so far with respect to the working methods of the Council and particularly the increasing resort to open debates on issues of topical importance. The open meetings provide non-members with the opportunity to participate and contribute to the work of the Council. It gives the members of the General Assembly the opportunity to dialogue with the Council on matters of international peace and security. The debates have demonstrated the inextricable interrelationship between international peace and security on the one hand and development on the other, the latter being the preserve of the General Assembly.

But as indicated by previous speakers, notably the representative of Ireland, draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly after such meetings should reflect the input of participating non-members of the Security Council. Furthermore, there should be a deliberate effort in subsequent actions of the Security Council to incorporate the views of the United Nations membership. The United Nations needs to be more transparent, as do all of its other associated organs.

In conclusion, we believe that the Security Council continues to play a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security. On the eve of the new millennium, we have the golden opportunity to revitalize it, to make it more democratic and to enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy in order to reflect the universal character of the Organization.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

With political will and some flexibility on the part of delegations on the core issues, we can reach agreement on this vital issue of reform of the Council. History will judge us very harshly if we let this opportunity pass by. We owe it to the next millennium to democratize the Council.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform will begin its new session at the dawn of the third millennium. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to resume the debate in a new spirit, giving priority to the interests of the international community and to the principles of the Charter.

If we wish to have a new world order built on democracy, the United Nations must be the entity embodying that order, and therefore United Nations bodies must undergo democratic reform. However, United Nations reform will be meaningless if it is not accompanied by reform of the Security Council, the organ entrusted by the membership of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Security Council reform has two interrelated aspects: expansion of its membership and reform of its methods of work. The Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held at Durban in September 1998 stressed that the expansion and reform of the Security Council must be an indivisible part of a common and complementary process that takes into account the principles of sovereign equality among States and equitable geographic distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democracy in the working methods of the Security Council, including decision-making therein.

My delegation therefore hopes that these aspects of reform — expansion and reform of the working methods of the Council — will be given equal importance in future meetings of the Working Group. We believe that the crisis facing the Security Council, beginning with the United States of America's hegemony over the Council following the end of the cold war and its exploitation of Council mechanisms to attain narrow political objectives, has created an even more pressing need for reform of the working methods of the Security Council. This is the way to ensure a more democratic Security Council that functions in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Allow me to mention some shortcomings and imbalances in the work of the Security Council that have led to a loss of its credibility. We hope that the Working Group will take these observations into account, as they reflect the way in which the Security Council has dealt with the situation in Iraq from 1990 to date.

First, the Security Council has become a cover for the perpetration of crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide. There is no doubt that the comprehensive sanctions imposed on Iraq since 1990 run counter to the principles of the Charter and to those of international law and international humanitarian law and to all the principles and conventions on human rights. According to the latest report of the United Nations Children's

Fund, these sanctions have led to the death of half a million Iraqi children under the age of 5 and of many more people, including women and the elderly. This crime of genocide continues, because the United States of America exploits the sanctions in order to change the political regime in Iraq and in order to exact revenge on the Iraqi people. In the most recent example, it forced the Security Council to adopt resolution 1284 (1999). It is a defective and deceptive resolution. It places further restrictions on Iraq and puts off the lifting of sanctions until some indefinite time in the future. Essentially, it rewrites previous Council resolutions. The Working Group must look into means of preventing mechanisms of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter being used to perpetrate crimes of genocide.

Secondly, the Security Council has abnegated its responsibility for putting an end to crimes of aggression and for holding the perpetrators of such crimes to account. Since 1991 the United States of America and Great Britain have imposed two no-fly zones over Iraq. They have used military force against Iraq without a mandate from the Council. To date, those two countries have flown more than 300,000 military sorties over Iraq. They have continuously bombarded civilian installations, in addition to carrying out the two aggressions of 1993, the aggression of 1996 and the aggression on 16 to 20 December of last year. Iraq regularly and continuously informs the Council of these acts of aggression. The Council is unable to take any measure to put an end to such aggression or to hold the perpetrators to account.

It is ironic that the United States and Great Britain, while strongly pushing for the adoption of resolution 1284 (1999) and supporting 49 previous resolutions against Iraq, also put forward a text demanding respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. Before the ink was dry on resolution 1284 (1999), the United States and Great Britain breached it by carrying out aggression against Iraq. Indeed the Permanent Representative of Britain, the President of the Security Council for this month, declared to an Arab newspaper, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, on 19 December that the United States and Great Britain do not require a Security Council resolution in order to impose the no-fly zones. Is it possible to imagine worse contempt for the principles of the Charter?

This very week two scientists, from the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, and Jacksonville State University in the state of Alabama in the United States, during a meeting with British parliamentarians said that the use of depleted uranium is a crime against humanity. The United States and Britain have used 300 tons of this radioactive weapons against Iraq under the cover of implementing Security Council resolution 678 (1991). We therefore call on the Working Group to look into this serious matter.

Thirdly, Security Council procedures have been abused to spy on Iraq and to falsify facts. What has been uncovered regarding the practices of the United Nations Special Commission and its officials truly requires a serious reaction. The Commission spied on Iraq for the United States and Israel. The Commission operated chemical and biological laboratories in Baghdad with the objective of falsifying facts. The Commission published deceptive reports on Iraq's cooperation in order to prolong the sanctions and to justify aggression against Iraq. All of this took place over eight and a half years under the very nose of the international community. Now, is it not time to look into ways and means to prevent a subsidiary body of the Security Council being turned into an organ of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Mossad? In the absence of such measures, States cannot be sure that those wearing United Nations blue helmets are indeed international civil servants and not spies posing a grave threat to the national security of such States.

Fourthly, the Security Council has now become the ultimate example of double standards. There are many examples of this fact. They stretch from Iraq to Palestine, to Libya, to the Sudan, to Kosovo, to Rwanda, to East Timor — and the list is getting longer. Indeed, double standards have now been extended to how particular paragraphs in a given resolution are considered. For example, while Iraq was asked to implement resolution 687 (1991), the Security Council, in a procedure unprecedented in its arbitrariness, continues to completely ignore paragraph 14, which is part of the very same resolution. The reason is that the Council fears raising the issue of weapons of mass destruction that Israel possesses. These weapons gravely threaten Arab national security as well as international peace and security.

Fifthly, the Security Council has ignored fundamental principles of the Charter, including the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. Iraq has sent numerous letters to the Council pointing out the fact that in 1998 the United States adopted a domestic law regarding the liberation of Iraq. We also drew the Council's attention to the United States declaration that it had begun to train groups of Iraqi

nationals as mercenaries at its military bases, in order to carry out acts of terrorism inside Iraq.

The news of such flagrant intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq and of preparations for carrying out acts of terrorism on Iraqi territory were met with complete inaction on the part of the Security Council. This was because the party at which the complaints were directed — the United States of America, which has hegemony over the Council — is the judge and jury in the Council. Were the United States to accuse a State of perpetrating but one tenth of what it has perpetrated against Iraq, then we would immediately see missiles, smart and dumb alike, raining down on that other State's cities and villages. Indeed, that State would immediately be added to the list of States that supposedly support terrorism, and sanctions would be imposed on it.

We cite such examples for the consideration of the Working Group in its debate on reforming the working methods of the Security Council. Our objective is to reaffirm the international responsibility of the Security Council as an institution and as a Charter-mandated organ and to prevent its abuse as a political tool of the foreign policy of any State. To that end, my country, Iraq, will continue to resist United States hegemony over the Security Council and to defend the interests of our people and of humanity.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): After birth and development, review and reform are the inevitable stages of any institution's life if it is to continue to sustain its credible service to and address the dynamic requirements of the peoples it is created to serve. This is even more true when it comes to an institution as universal as the United Nations. The pain of labour that preceded the birth of this Organization is still fresh in many minds, as are the progress and strides made in the five decades of tides and troughs that have shaped its development and brought it to an age ripe enough for it to deserve a comprehensive review and reform aimed at sustaining and enhancing the authority, legitimacy and credibility of the Organization into the next century.

We believe it was with this dynamic of nature and felt need in mind that we eagerly adopted resolution 48/26 six years ago, establishing an Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. The Security Council is not only one of the principal organs of the United Nations; it is our Organization's most vital organ in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is the executive and enforcement arm of the United Nations. Therefore, no United Nations reform will be worth the name if we cannot reform the Security Council in its composition and functioning alike. Reform of the United Nations in general hinges on the reform of the Security Council.

Despite this strong need for change, the past six years of our collective exercise on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council have borne no substantial fruit. Nevertheless, the exercise has been revealing on many accounts, which are well documented in the Working Group's reports, and has contributed to a better understanding of the forces of pressure and resistance among the membership.

Reform is a continuing process and cannot therefore be worked out on prescribed time limits, as we believe that the reform of the Security Council will be neither meaningful nor complete unless we arrive at a ratifiable global consensus on the composition and functioning of a reformed Security Council. Nepal, as a modern democracy, has accepted the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter as a basic plank of its foreign policy and we cannot think of making this intergovernmental Organization more removed from the ideals, values and culture of a democratic institution. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nepal supports the common position on the question of Security Council reform reached at the Durban summit of the Movement.

Nepal believes in the primacy of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. In the exercise of its power, the Council must uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter, be democratic in its composition and transparent in its functioning and never endeavour to curtail the authority of the General Assembly, the most democratic of all United Nations bodies.

The delegation of Nepal hopes that the next round of the Open-ended Working Group's exercise will result in some concrete progress. Time is running out as we approach the new millennium. The new millennium being not only an accident of time but basically a frame of mind, any further delay or failure in Security Council reform may be construed as a mark of an organic unpreparedness of the United Nations to step into the next century with a full measure of authority, legitimacy, credibility and mission.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): The attainment of the objective of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council is long overdue. Six years of hard work in the Working Group have yet to produce a concrete and universally acceptable formula to effect the desired reform.

There has, however, been some movement forward, although not as rapidly as many of us would have desired. Following six years of extensive and substantive deliberations, most of the key elements of reform have become clear or less ambiguous. There is already consensus on a number of important aspects or principles of reform which, among other things, include, first, the need to reform the composition and functioning of the Security Council; secondly, the need to make the Security Council more equitably representative by increasing its members; thirdly, the need to improve the working methods and the decision-making process of the Security Council towards greater openness and transparency; and, finally, the need to consider all aspects of reform as an integrated package, including the consideration of the question of the veto.

However, a considerable divergence of views on certain other aspects of the reform still exits, especially in respect of such questions as permanent membership expansion, the size of an enlarged Council, methods of selecting new permanent members and, finally, the problem of the veto right of both the current and prospective permanent members.

Clearly, what is lacking is not ideas and proposals, but the necessary political will to achieve the common objective. What is required is a clear commitment and manifestation of this political will, without which the entire undertaking will risk becoming increasingly an exercise in futility. This is the point that the President of the General Assembly himself stressed in his opening remarks on this agenda item.

Malaysia's position on Security Council reform has been made amply clear in our previous statements on the subject in the General Assembly and in the Working Group. We continue to believe in the need for a comprehensive reform of the Council. We continue to advocate the enlargement of the Council's membership, commensurate with the substantial increase in the number of members of the United Nations, the majority of which are from the developing world. The size of enlargement of a restructured Security Council should best reflect the need for enhanced representation of this particular group of countries.

Malaysia considers the veto to be one of the most undemocratic features of the Security Council. Much of the impasse in the Council has to do with this aspect of the decision-making process. The issue of the veto ought to be addressed seriously and exhaustively, not cursorily and perfunctorily. We should seriously consider how best it should be modified, circumscribed or diluted in consonance with the present realities and to pave the way towards its eventual elimination. Needless to say, a positive and constructive attitude of the permanent members of the Security Council will be crucial if this issue is to be addressed effectively. Malaysia stands by the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that this anachronistic decision-making mechanism should be applied, if necessary, only to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter and that it should be modified and eventually eliminated. An objective assessment in the discussion of this question in the Working Group only points to the universally accepted view that the exercise of the veto should be curtailed as part of the reform package.

Malaysia also attaches great importance to the need to improve further the effectiveness and transparency of the work of the Council. We note that significant progress has been made in the discussions on a number of reform measures under cluster II. We believe that at the core of these discussions is the importance of enhancing the process of consultations between the Council and States that are directly involved in particular issues, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter. Such direct consultations and interactions will certainly contribute to improving the decision-making process of the Council.

At the same time, my delegation supports more frequent open debates and formal private meetings of the Council. We also welcome the innovative format of interactive open meetings of the Council, as was initiated by the United Kingdom presidency last Wednesday. The frequent holding of more meetings in these formats will go a long way towards making the Council more transparent and accessible to the larger membership of the United Nations, on whose behalf the Council carries out its Charter-mandated responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The reform process is indeed a complex and challenging undertaking affecting the vital interests of all Member States. Nevertheless, the challenges of reform must be met to ensure the continued viability and relevance of our Organization, in particular the Security Council. We must now face the challenge of examining further different aspects of Council reform and expedite the process of putting together the necessary outline of a reform package that could be developed and refined to meet the general agreement stipulated in resolution 53/30. The points of convergence among us must therefore continue to be consolidated and strengthened while we work to bridge the remaining gaps towards a compromise solution. The task is not insurmountable if there is political will to carry the process forward to its logical conclusion.

The upcoming discussion in the Working Group must therefore propel this process forward, if interest on this subject is to be sustained. My delegation believes that unless we address this question in a constructive and progressive manner and manifest the necessary political will to move on to serious negotiations on a final package, we run the real risk of deepening further the current impasse, thereby increasing the creeping sense of cynicism and pessimism among Member States. That would be detrimental to the entire reform process.

We must remind ourselves that this exercise cannot go on indefinitely. It will have to come to a stop sooner or later. The large number of delegations speaking on this item at this session of the General Assembly reflects a continuing active interest in the reform of the Security Council. We hope that this active interest will also be manifested in the upcoming Working Group discussions. We would, however, urge a further manifestation of greater flexibility on the part of Member States than has been shown thus far if we are to make any progress.

My delegation would encourage you, Mr. President, as current Chairman of the Working Group, to use the prestige and prerogatives of your office, as well as your considerable diplomatic skills and experience, to re-energize the process and to seek further progress in our work on this highly charged question. We look forward to the continued good work of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, at the upcoming sessions of the Working Group. We urge them to reinject the sense of urgency and dynamism that once characterized the discussions in the Working Group, with, of course, the cooperation of all Member States.

The progress made, or lack of it, during the upcoming session may well determine the fate of the Working Group.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/54/PV.86

General Assembly

Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Monday, 20 December 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hasan (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 38 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to thank the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of the delegation of Chile, for his initiative to consider in the Assembly agenda item 38, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I should also like to thank his predecessor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, Mr. Didier Opertti, and Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden for their notable efforts to make progress in the discussion on this item.

Consideration of this item in this forum is meaningful for two reasons. It is symbolic, on the one hand, for the problem of enlarging the Security Council to be discussed in the General Assembly — the most democratic body of the United Nations — and, on the other, for such a discussion to be taking place during one of the last General Assembly meetings of the millennium.

Since negotiations began in the Working Group, we realized that this would be an extraordinarily complex task that would require us to reconcile different — often mutually exclusive — interests. The assessment of this process has revealed the existence of as many proposals as speakers. But that does not discourage us; on the contrary, it is a source of hope, because the United Nations is the best forum for the discussion of ideas; very often such processes are very lengthy but, without a doubt, the desire for change and progress finally prevails.

As my delegation is aware that this is a symbolic occasion, and with the aim of giving the reform process new impetus, I will reaffirm certain concepts that have been the basis of the Chilean position on this topic.

For my country, the reform of the Security Council must be inspired by the need to increase not only the Council's efficiency but also its representativeness and legitimacy, in order to make it a more democratic organ. The expansion of the Council in both categories will ensure that these qualities characterize the work of the Council in maintaining international peace and security for the other Members of the Organization.

Another of the medium-term objectives of the reform is limiting the right of the veto to matters coming under Chapter VII of the Charter. In the long term the veto might be eliminated.

00-21805 (E)

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As regards the working methods, we believe that there has been such considerable progress in the discussion of the cluster II issues that there can be said to be general agreement on many points. We believe that agreement on these points could be made official in some appropriate manner. We believe that this can be done right away, by making a recommendation to the General Assembly, without waiting on the results of the discussions on the enlargement of the membership of the Council.

While the concept of the reform as a "package" has been commonly accepted, we believe this concept needs further refinement. We believe that this package concept emerged from the idea of taking advantage of the urgent need to increase the number of members of the Security Council, particularly of the permanent members, in order to obtain concessions and reforms in the area of transparency and working methods — concessions that otherwise might never have been obtained. It seems that the original idea has been distorted over time, and this has resulted in a dangerous attachment to conditionality, which my delegation considers inappropriate from a methodological point of view.

Having said this regarding cluster II, allow me now to discuss certain aspects related to the cluster I issues, which we believe are of the greatest importance.

As we all know, two permanent members of the Security Council reject an enlargement of the Council's membership beyond 20 or 21 members. This imposes limitations even before any discussion with regard to the Council's enlargement. Either we carry out our discussions in the light of this reality and distribute the five or six new posts that these permanent members are prepared to accept, or we continue to discuss hypothetical scenarios that will never be realized as long as those objections remain. Perhaps the time has come to face this reality, which to date neither the other permanent members, nor those wishing to gain a permanent position, nor the Non-Aligned Movement, nor the regional groups — in the final analysis, no one — has been able to change. So we wonder if it is worthwhile under these circumstances to continue to discuss numbers and distribution of seats, ignoring the existence of this fundamental impediment.

Despite the obstacles previously noted and the prevailing uncertainties, my delegation is optimistic. The topic of the reform of the Security Council is no less important than the decisions regarding the founding of the Organization that were adopted in 1945. Initiating a reform that would increase the efficiency, representativeness and legitimacy of the Council, by democratizing it, is an obligation to the future. This obligation should inspire us to continue this dialogue more flexibly and generously, for the future of our Organization.

Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana): I wish to align my delegation with the statements made on this issue by the spokespersons of the African Group and the Southern African Development Community. Since the item before us has been discussed exhaustively in this body, I shall be brief and to the point.

As the delegation of a country from a region that is under-represented, particularly in the permanent-seat category of Security Council membership, we fervently insist that the Council should be expanded in both categories of its membership. Out of a total of 53 countries, Africa is currently allocated only three non-permanent seats.

It was on the basis of this realization that our leaders in the continent decided that Africa should be allocated two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats during the current phase of the reform of the Security Council. I can assure the Assembly that our instructions as African representatives are firm, and we appeal for serious consideration of this genuine and legitimate demand during negotiations in the Open-ended Working Group. In our view, the Security Council should be expanded to no fewer than 26 members.

The reform of the Security Council, of course, goes beyond numbers. We are determined not only to bring about equity in geographical representation, but also to instil a culture of democracy in the manner in which the Council conducts its business. It has always been our contention that the veto is an undemocratic instrument that serves narrow national interests and thus deserves to be done away with.

However, we are acutely aware of the political realities on the ground and that the current permanent members are unwilling to shed this undemocratic power. Thus we have adopted a pragmatic approach: for the time being, the possibility of using the veto ought to be curtailed only to matters dealt with under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The question of the veto not only erects hurdles along the path towards the democratization of the Security Council, but in effect delays progress on the whole question of the reform of the Security Council.

especially because the veto is intrinsically linked to the issue of the expansion of the membership of the Security Council. Notwithstanding our previously stated position on the veto, we are of the view that it should be extended to new permanent members as well. That is to say, the new permanent members in an expanded Security Council should have the same prerogatives and powers as the current ones.

The Security Council also ought to be made more transparent in the conduct of its work. We agree that informal consultations are necessary in the conduct of United Nations diplomacy, but they should not substitute for transparency and accountability. Thus, the Council has to hold more open meetings. In fact, the Security Council should change its tendency to organize debates after it has already concluded consultations among its members. There must be public orientation debates to inform resolutions and other decisions that are to be taken at the end of such debates.

In an orderly and accountable culture, the Security Council should find it worthwhile to hear the views of non-members first, so that such views can effectively be taken into account during consultations among its members. That way, we can ensure that its decisions are truly reflective of the will of the larger United Nations community, thus conferring genuine legitimacy upon them.

Mr. Schmidt (Austria): Austria is taking the floor today because it is convinced of the necessity of a reform that will make the United Nations fit for the next century. The legitimacy of the bodies of the United Nations is of primary importance in this context. We therefore regard Security Council reform as one of the priorities the membership of the United Nations has to deal with.

As member States are aware, Austria has been active in participating in the high-level Working Group on Security Council reform and has made its position regarding such reform very clear, most recently on 8 February, 15 April and 29 June this year. I will therefore not repeat it here. My delegation would, however, like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, Foreign Minister Opertti of Uruguay, as well as the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Dahlgren and De Saram, for the excellent work they have done.

The President of the General Assembly rightly pointed out last Thursday that credible progress has been made over the last couple of years, but that there is also an impasse on certain critical issues. It is precisely this impasse that has led to a lot of understandable frustration and it is precisely this impasse that we have to overcome in the interest of a strong and credible United Nations for the next century. A lot of ideas, many of them good and workable ideas, have been put forward. It is now imperative that we not limit ourselves to repeating entrenched positions, but that we all engage in serious negotiations with a view to really moving Security Council reform forward in the foreseeable future. The mere fact that we have been holding this debate for two days now and that so many members have felt the necessity to express themselves on the issue should in itself testify to the urgency with which Security Council reform is considered by the majority of United Nations Members.

My delegation believes that we can achieve progress on this sensitive issue only if we approach the subject of reform with new ideas and new political will. Unless there is a serious reconsideration of positions in the major capitals of the world, we will not be able to achieve any substantial progress. What we need more than anything else is a new political impetus, as the Secretary-General has only recently reminded us. Austria therefore urges all member States to engage in a new substantive dialogue in the coming year.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): My delegation considers the question of Security Council reform to be at the forefront of issues which need to be resolved in the wider context of adapting the United Nations so that it may better cope with the challenges that it is facing at the turn of the millennium.

There seems to be a clear consensus that there cannot be any substantial reform of the United Nations without an enhancement of the capabilities of the Security Council to perform its Charter duties, *inter alia*, by making it more representative and efficient. While important progress has been made by the Working Group, it is no secret that this progress falls short of the expectations that have been accompanying the work of that body since its inception. The previous year did not result in a long awaited breakthrough either and, while movement forward was noted in certain areas, divergence on some important issues of the reform persists. This can in no way be attributed to the leadership of the Group. On the contrary, the Chairman of the Working Group, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, Mr. Didier Opertti of Uruguay, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden

and John De Saram of Sri Lanka, did a truly outstanding job.

The position of Poland on the issues relating to what we call Security Council reform has been presented on numerous occasions over the last several years. I would like nevertheless to seize this opportunity to emphasize what we believe to be of particular importance to the future work of the Group.

The size and composition of the Security Council, the principal United Nations organ in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security acting on behalf of all its Member States, should reflect the momentous changes that have taken place on the global geopolitical scene since the last reform, which was instituted more than three decades ago. It is thus essential to enlarge the Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. We see this as a *conditio sine qua non* of strengthening the Security Council's hand in discharging its Charter obligations.

While being fully aware of the various opinions on the make-up of the enlarged permanent component of the Security Council and the methods of its selection, I would like to reiterate that the international role of both Germany and Japan, including their commitment and multidimensional contribution to the maintenance of the international peace and security, should be recognized by those two countries' being elected as permanent members of the Security Council. Likewise, the representation of the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean should be brought into line with their status in contemporary international relations through a corresponding increase in the number of permanent seats in the Council. We would also like to reconfirm our strong conviction that the parallel enlargement of the category of non-permanent members should include an additional seat for the Eastern European Group of States, whose number has more than doubled during the last decade.

As to the decision-making process, we have noted the various proposals submitted in the course of the deliberations. This is an area where a further exchange of views is clearly needed. What we would like to stress at this particular moment is the importance of ensuring that there is no discrimination between the new and the present members and that the solution which will finally be adopted should also take into account the widely shared opinion that, in order to be an effective guardian of peace, the Security Council must be able to act promptly and decisively whenever circumstances so require.

My delegation believes that, after several years of intensive — and in many respects exhaustive — discussions, the time has come to explore the avenues that would be more conducive to the success of our endeavour. We think that one such avenue is the wider use of informal negotiations, under the auspices of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Group, with the purpose of identifying areas of possible agreement and narrowing the existing differences where possible. We all know now useful this form of proceeding is in other United Nations forums. There is hardly any reason why the Working Group on Security Council reform should continue to shun this mechanism, which, incidentally, could also encourage a larger number of countries to voice their views and concerns.

It is in the context of practicality that I would like to emphasize the importance of the decision taken by the Chairman of the Working Group to produce a questionnaire in order to seek the views of Members on the main issues regarding Security Council reform. Numerous States, Poland among them, have responded to the Chairman's request. We believe that a written summary of the positions expressed in the course of this exercise would help further talks. It is important that we build on the progress already achieved. Repeating the same statements over and over again will not bring us any closer to the goal that we all agreed upon quite a few years ago.

To conclude, I would like to express the hope that the current session of the General Assembly will bring about the long-awaited breakthrough on the remaining issues of Security Council reform. I can assure the President of the Polish delegation's full support for his efforts to lead us towards this target.

Mr. Erdös (Hungary) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the General Assembly's once again taking up the work of the reform of the Security Council before the end of this stage of the current session. We look forward to the continuation, at the beginning of next year, of the activities of the Working Group responsible for this matter. We recall that the vital need for Security Council reform was stressed in numerous statements made in the General Assembly during the general debate. The weaknesses that have become apparent and the failures that have taken place in the activities of the Council were attributed, among other things, to the absence of such a reform. We also welcome the impressive number of speakers that have taken the floor, which clearly indicates the strong interest taken by

Member States of the United Nations in the question of Council reform.

As other colleagues have indicated, the question of the reform of the Council has been a concern for us for many years. Like them, I cannot conceal a certain level of frustration given the scant progress that has been made in the Working Group. However, this reform is no less important today than it was at the time the Working Group began its activities, and it should certainly remain at the centre of the attention of Member States.

In this context, I would like to encourage the President to continue to follow attentively, like his predecessors, the development of the work of the Group and to make full use of the various consultative mechanisms and discussion formats at his disposal.

Hungary has on several occasions already had the opportunity, both on behalf of our country and as a member of the group of 10 countries, to present its position on this matter.

First of all, the composition of the Security Council should reflect the changes that have taken place in the world. We favour an increase in the number of members in both categories. We do not know currently what the specific parameters of such an action would be, but the discussions that we will hold on this matter within the Working Group should guide us towards a rational solution. What we know, however, is that in addition to a certain number of new non-permanent members, the presence of new permanent members of the Security Council representing Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean alongside the industrialized countries could serve to strengthen the democratic nature, credibility and prestige of the body.

Secondly, with regard to the extremely delicate subject of the right of the veto — and bearing in mind certain insurmountable realities — we favour limiting its use. Of course, we are flexible as to the modalities to be selected for this purpose. We believe, for reasons of principle, that the old or new status of permanent members should not make any difference in this respect.

Thirdly, we believe that an agreement on the institutionalization of periodic reviews of decisions taken in the area of Council reform could have a beneficial effect on our future debates in the Working Group on other questions relating to Council reform. Such an agreement could also have a certain effect on the attitude of future members of the Council with respect to subjects under debate, as well as on their sense of responsibility vis-à-vis other Member States of the United Nations.

We are aware that the exercise in which we are involved is a very lengthy undertaking. We should therefore value even the modest accomplishments and the gradual measures that we have been able to attain. Without losing sight of the basic objective of reshaping the Council and introducing substantial changes within it, we should not underestimate the modifications that have recently been made to the work of the Council, which tend towards greater transparency.

Despite the difficulties that we have encountered and that we still need to overcome, we should not forget that the alternative to the efforts we are making to promote reform of the Security Council would be to freeze the status quo and thereby risk perpetuating a state of affairs that was long ago overtaken by world events. It is in this spirit that my delegation is prepared to cooperate with the President in pursuing the objective that the General Assembly has set for itself in this regard.

Mr. Ouch (Cambodia): On the basis of General Assembly resolutions 47/62 and 48/26, we are gathered today to pursue the question of Security Council reform — which has been the object of intense discussions among Members of the United Nations — in order to strengthen the Council's authority and assure its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

For six years, progress has been made on various aspects within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. However, with regard to the questions of expansion of the membership of the Security Council and reform of its working methods, a wide divergence of views still exists among the various parties.

It is our responsibility to succeed in our work of reforming the Security Council to ensure that that important organ will be viable and relevant in the coming century. As we all know, this is not an easy task; but I strongly believe that no matter how complicated and difficult reform of the Security Council may be, with goodwill and through mutual understanding in negotiations and consultations, a solution suitable to the interests of all countries will ultimately be found.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express our positions on points related to the issues. They are as follows.

First of all, the Security Council will not be meaningfully reformed unless its composition is expanded and its decision- making process is more transparent and democratic. In this regard, Cambodia is part of the large majority of States that supports an increase in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. This is because, in our view, the legitimacy and quality of the Council's work can be enhanced and reflect the realities of the international community only if a few more responsible Member States are elected to perform the agreed mandate. The addition of both industrialized and developing countries as new permanent and non-permanent members is essential to adapt the Security Council and its mandate to the changing world.

In this regard, my delegation favours the idea to increase the permanent membership by two members from industrialized countries and three members from developing countries. With regard to the non-permanent members, we should strive to achieve the necessary balance between enhancing the opportunities for participation and maintaining the efficiency of the Security Council.

The second issue is the veto power. We understand that new permanent members should have equal rights in the decision-making process. However, we see an urgent need for reforming the use of veto power, as the veto has weakened the Council's ability to undertake appropriate measures in compliance with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe that limiting the use of the veto in the decision-making process would enable the Security Council to protect efficiently the interests of the international community and to promote democracy within the Council.

Thirdly, considerable progress has already been made in discussions on how to improve the working methods of, and enhance transparency in, the Security Council. The principles of transparency and openness are of the utmost importance and must be strengthened in the working methods of the Security Council. Interested States are always concerned about what is being discussed in the Council, behind closed doors. It would be useful and efficient if representatives of an interested State could have the opportunity to participate in discussions on issues related to their country, or at least make a statement explaining the situation or be invited to listen to the discussions and learn of the decisions taken that would affect the destiny of the people of that sovereign State.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has already had the opportunity of expressing its views on Security Council reform, most recently in June of last year in the open-ended Working Group that is dealing with this question. Accordingly, I will be brief.

This topic has been the subject of debate for many years. Why has no progress been made? Though the need to adapt the structures of our Organization to changing realities is so obvious as to require no discussion, the divergent positions of Members on this issue have stymied action.

This has proved very harmful to our Organization. In an intergovernmental body that by definition requires concessions from all sides in order for agreements to be reached, the decision-making process itself is in crisis. At a time when the world is demanding that we adapt multilateral institutions to changing circumstances, we are demonstrating our inability to do so. Worse still, the growing divergence between the Council's composition and methods of work on the one hand and current realities on the other is having the effect of marginalizing the Council — and the United Nations itself — by inhibiting its ability to intervene in the very situations it was created to deal with.

Our position on Security Council reform is based on a number of principles. These are, however, tempered by a degree of flexibility, because we realize that it is legitimate to use different criteria with regard to the Council's composition, and views differ, as is always the case in life, as to the application of those criteria. I will give six examples.

First, the substantial increase in the membership of the Organization since 1963, as well as the principle of universality, suggest the need to expand the membership of the Council. However, we also understand the argument to the contrary, which is that with fewer members, the decision-making process is more efficient.

We believe that a suitable way of reconciling the two positions is to opt for a range of 21 to 27 members instead of the current 15. There is no scientific way of choosing the right number; it will have to be the result of negotiations that will require concessions from all the parties involved.

Secondly, the Charter of the United Nations enshrines the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members. However, it is clear that some actors on the international scene carry more weight than others due to their size, economic capacity, military capability, influence in the area of international relations and other criteria. That is why we accept the possibility of a weighting system in the decision-making process, even though, as a matter of principle, we do not endorse the existence of permanent members or of the right of veto as set out in Article 27 of the Charter. Ultimately, political negotiations will be unavoidable, which once again will require concessions from all parties.

Thirdly, if the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership are preserved — a solution that we believe is far from ideal — the idea of allocating a permanent seat to each region has a certain appeal. However, it has the tremendous drawback of shifting the differences and tensions we experience in our global Organization to the regions themselves. This could poison the atmosphere, which — at least in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean — has of late been characterized by a spirit of extraordinary constructiveness and solidarity. The risk of divisive elements engendered by this debate "contaminating" fruitful cooperation is simply too high. But in the very unlikely event that all the regions accept a formula that includes the expansion of permanent membership on the basis of regional criteria, we would be prepared to agree to its consideration.

Fourthly, many delegations have insisted on the need for greater transparency in the work of the Council. We associate ourselves with these calls, while recognizing that delicate situations may arise that, by their very nature, justify informal and relatively restricted meetings. The answer would be to ensure that this method of operation is not abused and to enhance the dissemination of information to non-members of the Council on the proceedings therein.

Fifthly, as has been pointed out by other speakers, some progress has been possible on a group of measures that, in our internal jargon, are known as cluster 2 issues. It is clear, however, that these cannot be separated from the so-called cluster 1 issues.

Sixthly, an issue that we have not explored sufficiently is the reinforcement of the powers of the General Assembly as they relate to the Security Council, whether by working within the existing provisions of the Charter or, if we wish to be more ambitious, by amending the Charter. The debate that took place in plenary meeting in this Hall a few weeks ago on the report submitted to us on the work of the Council hinted at the potential of such an approach.

In conclusion, I would like to state that our highest priority is to strengthen multilateralism and the United Nations. We would be willing to make concessions that depart from our ideal as to the composition and the functioning of the Security Council, in the interests of accomplishing this higher objective. We hope that other delegations share our belief in the importance of strengthening the United Nations. Perhaps our consideration of this issue will be sufficient to enable all of us to step back from the positions that we have adopted and re-examine, with a clear mind and renewed interest, how to move forward on the long-delayed reform of the Security Council.

We believe that the Open-ended Working Group established for that purpose, is the right place to do so.

Mr. Osei (Ghana): An overwhelming desire has been expressed by Member States during this debate for reform in the work of the Organization. I am therefore happy and privileged to be part of this process. For if the United Nations is to be able to execute its envisioned responsibility diligently and efficiently, it is important that serious and sustained efforts be made to give impetus to the reform process and to maintain its dynamism. The core of the reform touches on the Security Council, whose decisions bind all Members of the Organization.

The Council must be reformed to ensure that it can undertake its responsibilities under the Charter more effectively, with the full confidence of the Member States. This reform must be guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation, based on the principles enshrined in the Charter.

In this connection, we wholly subscribe to the Non-Aligned Movement's statement on all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Council, complemented by the African position, as expressed in the Harare Declaration of June 1997. Africa's claim to at least two permanent seats should be adequately addressed, since it is the largest regional group in the Organization.

This apart, we also endorse the Non-Aligned Movement proposal that a periodic review of the structure and functioning of the Security Council is necessary in order to enable it to respond better and more

effectively to the new challenges in international relations, especially with regard to the maintenance of peace and security. I hardly need add that it is only through a restructuring of the Council on these lines that perceptions of selectivity in dealing with issues of international peace and sustainable development can be avoided and the causes of conflict, whenever and wherever they occur, can be dealt with in an effective and impartial manner.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My delegation is convinced that the proposals of the Non-Aligned Movement, complemented by those of the African Group, contain the seeds of a just and equitable solution which should enable our work to reach an early conclusion, to the satisfaction of all, thus strengthening the Organization. We stand by those proposals.

The new and perhaps challenging responsibilities that the Organization will face in the next century — issues of peace and security, which I have already mentioned, development and poverty alleviation, the dimensions of globalization, humanitarian intervention and its implications in contemporary international law and the concept of good governance — require the active support and cooperation of all Member States, irrespective of size. The Council reforms will ensure such support.

The Working Group lacks not ideas, but the necessary political desire for compromise. Let us all resolve to give the Group the flexibility to achieve that desire.

Ms. Elliott (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Guyana.

On 11 September, during the 4043rd meeting of the Security Council, many listened as several speakers described in heart-stopping detail the brutalities inflicted by lawless militias on countless men, women and children in East Timor. The occasion was unique, in that it not only offered an all-too-rare public glimpse of the workings of the most important instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security — the United Nations Security Council — but, equally importantly, it allowed for the active participation of more than 30 non-members of the Council, under the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Another striking example of this move towards transparency could be found in the open briefings by the Secretariat before the Council on 10 and 16 December on the situation in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively. While some of these open proceedings of the Council may at times reflect too much on the abstract and academic, and still leave much more to be desired in terms of their need to be institutionalized, CARICOM delegations view this emerging trend towards transparency in the Council's work as a step in the right direction. But it is important to keep in mind that none of this might have occurred were it not for the intensive deliberations over the past six years of the Working Group on Security Council reform.

When the Working Group concluded its work during the fifty-third session, many were left with renewed hope that an important breakthrough would materialize during the current session. This optimism was based in part on the high volume of responses to a series of questions that were presented by the Bureau and contained in a letter circulated by the Chairman of the Working Group. The exercise proved useful in not only advancing our discussion of the matter but also in actively encouraging the participation of delegations that had not previously stated their positions. Consequently, we feel that another round of deliberations during the current session, in a truly open-ended format, would help further the process on all the various proposals on reform.

It should be clear to any observer that the geopolitical alliances and realities that dominated and shaped the years immediately following the birth of this Organization can no longer serve as a useful model for the development of international relations. Indeed, one of the anachronistic features of that era that continues to haunt us is the current format of the Security Council.

In order to address this anachronism, CARICOM has always called for the democratization of the Council. In this regard, we fully subscribe to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that calls for expansion in the non-permanent category. At the same time, we have frequently stated that if general agreement could be found on expansion within the category of permanent members, this would be acceptable to us, provided that there is an adequate balance between the industrialized and developing nations.

In terms of numbers, if expansion takes place within both categories of membership, CARICOM would consider a total membership of 26 — the figure advanced by the Non-Aligned Movement — ideally balanced. Thus, one may conceive of two additional industrialized countries and four or five developing countries as new members within the permanent membership category, with the remaining seats being allocated to non-permanent members. However, as we have said, should such an agreement not be possible, we would be content to have an expansion of non-permanent membership. As for the proposals to allocate seats on a rotational basis, CARICOM has already expressed its willingness to consider this option as a means of resolving the issue of numbers, but would stress that any decision on this matter should be ultimately left to the discretion of individual regions.

In regard to the veto, CARICOM has consistently made it clear that it is anachronistic and anti-democratic and should therefore be abolished. But given the political realities that we must face, we are prepared to consider, for the time being, a restriction of its use to issues falling under Chapter VII. Moreover, in the belief that there should be no discrimination between permanent members — be they old or new — we believe that this privilege should be extended to any new entrants in this category.

It goes without saying that an amendment to the Charter and concurrent change in the membership of the Security Council could prove more acceptable if accompanied by the creation of a review mechanism. CARICOM feels that it would be of great merit to develop this proposal in a manner that would allow this body to comprehensively revisit the composition of the Council — say, every 15 years — in the light of possible changing circumstances and the needs of the international community.

CARICOM has closely observed this process these past six years and strongly feels that noteworthy progress has been made. We are frankly concerned by calls for the Working Group to be "strategically paused" or placed in a mode of "hibernation", since if this happens, there is the risk that the opportunity to reform the Council may be lost. We strongly feel that this important dialogue must be allowed to evolve naturally. CARICOM delegations will therefore continue to do their all to ensure its eventual success.

Mr. Chkheidze (Georgia): Let me express our appreciation for the convening of this meeting on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, which is an essential part of the reform of the United Nations as an institution.

I would also like to commend Ambassador de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Dahlgren of Sweden for the important role they have played in the Working Group.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the views of the Government of Georgia on this important matter. These are views that we have expressed on various occasions in the past, and our position has not changed substantially.

Since the establishment of the United Nations, the countries of the world and the international system have undergone significant changes. The end of the cold war has changed the power structure and the security needs of the contemporary world. However, the underlying values of the international system — such as respect for human rights and the rule of law — have remained in place. We believe that the mechanisms to implement these values in the current world should be adapted to respond to these changes and to evolving threats to world peace and security. In our view, the United Nations, as a global Organization, should, of necessity, undergo institutional changes.

We believe that the Security Council should be enlarged with the addition of both permanent and non-permanent members. We support the enlargement of the permanent membership of the Council through the addition of two industrialized countries, Germany and Japan, which are major contributors to global peace, security and development. We also support the addition of four non-permanent seats to provide equitable geographic representation in the Council. These would include countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. These changes would increase the Council's legitimacy, authority and capacity.

With regard to the size of the reformed Security Council, our position is that the number of members of the reformed Council should be in the low twenties.

In our view, proper reform of the structure and working methods of the Security Council requires that the expansion of the non-permanent membership of the Council be approached only together with the enlargement of the Council's permanent membership.

We also believe that a review of the use of the veto should be an integral part of the whole package of the reform of the Security Council. In our view, it is an absolute necessity that present and new permanent members of the reformed Council have equal power.

A number of different proposals have been put forward regarding the reform of the Security Council. Among these proposals we find interesting the view that the number of permanent seats on the Council should be expanded to ensure equitable geographic representation for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and the idea that the representation of these regions can be accomplished by rotation within each regional group.

We caution, however, that careful consideration would need to be given to the means of maintaining the effectiveness of the Security Council as a decision-making body if this type of reform were implemented.

As a final point, I would like to mention that we share the view that the issue of the enlargement of the Security Council and reform of its structure and working methods should be subject to review by the General Assembly once every 10 years or in accordance with the request of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today's item is being taken up again by the plenary of the General Assembly after having occupied six long years of discussion in the Working Group established under resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993. Six years after its establishment, it should be recalled that numerous meetings have been held at which a large majority of countries have spoken to express their opinions on the desired changes.

In our opinion, this is not the right time to repeat those opinions, since they have been repeatedly stated and are based on precedents. Furthermore, under resolution 53/30 of 23 November 1998, the General Assembly determined the majority required for adopting any resolution or decision on this subject, establishing it at least two thirds of its members.

I believe that, after these long years, during which countless working meetings have been held — many of which were terribly tedious and in which the Chairmen and the Vice-Chairmen alike exhausted themselves in vain seeking positive progress — we cannot persist in such attitudes at this session. That is why my delegation believes that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council must avoid further waste. It will therefore be necessary to act with a clear political will to carry out the reform process. That political will cannot be merely numerical; it must include at a fundamental level those States which today, under the Charter and in fact, have the greatest responsibility in decision-making.

Uruguay reiterates once again its will to achieve agreement, in the context of the norms of form and content that govern our work, on Security Council reform, ensuring that the Council respond to the political, geopolitical, economic and social realities of the new millennium and making it a more effective, more participatory and more transparent body in its management, in implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, which remain fully valid and to which we must adhere more closely in the new millennium than ever before.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate all its support and thanks for the excellent leadership of Mr. Opertti and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of Sri Lanka. We are convinced that we have the best team for reaching our goals.

For our part, we again reiterate that we are prepared to lend our support, without preconditions, to one or various changes that may be agreed upon by the Working Group, and we are also ready to act firmly, yet flexibly, to defend our proposals.

Mr. Castaneda Cornejo (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 generated great expectations and aspirations among the peoples of the world, not only because it created a mechanism for global collective security in the maintenance of international peace and security, but also because it created an instrument to promote friendly relations among nations; economic, political, social and cultural development; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the principles of equal rights, justice and self-determination.

The purpose of those States that participated in the San Francisco Conference, motivated by the scourge of two world wars, was to create an independent and democratic international body that would respond and act with the greatest possible legitimacy on the basis of the broadest participation in decision-making. However, the

antagonism and mistrust prevailing among the major Powers at that time led to a United Nations whose founding Charter contains provisions that arose from the historical circumstances of that era and currently reveal profound contradictions in relation to the purposes and principles contained therein and to which Member States are committed to respecting and promoting. The granting of privileges to specific States has led to their being used on many occasions to achieve special objectives or to paralyze the Organization, against the interests and desires of most States Members of the Organization.

We recognize that great progress has been made in the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter. However, despite this progress, greater efforts and political will are required if peace, justice, prosperity and democracy are truly to be achieved worldwide. There is a consensus among Member States that the Organization must be reformed and modernized to respond with greater efficiency and efficacy to the challenges faced by nations and to the hopes pinned on it, especially by the developing countries, which consider it to be the appropriate instrument for promoting the political, economic and social progress of all our peoples.

It is precisely in speaking of democracy that we think of the important role that the United Nations has played in promoting and strengthening it internationally. We have, however, witnessed resistance within the Organization that reflects the economic and political realities of current international relations, which are very different to those that prevailed when the world Organization was established.

On various occasions during the celebration of important events — *inter alia*, the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1985, the Security Council Summit of 1992 and the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization — world leaders have recognized and continue to recognize the important function that the Organization has carried out in compliance with its mandate and its contribution to shaping inter-State relations. They have noted that it is the sole universal institution, irreplaceable and essential to the international community, whose purposes and principles remain valid.

Nevertheless, in practice, declarations of intent still fail to become realities in consequence of the major differences and interests of States and groups of States Members of the Organization — especially as concerns the changes that need to be made to the power structure established under the Charter for the members of the Security Council — which have brought the reform process to a standstill and turned its deliberations into a vicious circle, creating a situation that we think may be very difficult to overcome.

Moreover, we consider that the reform of the Security Council is essential and cannot be put off in the light of the various events that have had an impact on the international community in the course of the last decade. Those events have served to reflect the weaknesses and limitations of the Organization and have, unfortunately, had negative effects that have called into question the Organization's ability, credibility, efficiency, effectiveness as well as its competence for maintaining international peace and security, as a result of the taking of unilateral or group decisions and actions in cases where action should have been taken only with the authorization of the Security Council.

We should therefore not be surprised that it is publicly said that the United Nations — and the Security Council in particular — is facing a crisis, and that it is our responsibility to demonstrate that we are capable of making the necessary changes for the United Nations to gain credibility and trust as a universally accepted instrument for collective security that carries out its work equitably, for the interests and aspirations of all the Members of the Organization, and not merely as an institution that simply endorses or legitimizes events after the fact without knowing whether or not they truly enjoy the support of the majority of its Members.

For six years, El Salvador has followed with great interest the deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We offered some thoughts on the reform process and stated our position on substantive issues during the Group's sixth session, held in July 1999. On that occasion we, like other delegations, said that it was regrettable and frustrating that progress had not been achieved, particularly on substantive issues, and that we found ourselves — as at the outset of the process — in a situation of greater polarization of positions.

We believe that it is timely to underscore that the events that have called into question the credibility of the Organization — and in particular that of the Security Council — should not be repeated, and that we must avoid doing anything that will deepen the crisis of trust in the Organization if we truly wish to preserve the

system of collective security established under the Charter. Otherwise, if unilateralism and regional action replace multilateralism and world action, the system will become increasingly precarious. In order to be effective, such action must be marked by the participation and acceptance of the majority of the member States of the international community.

We believe that international relations have developed significantly in the course of the last 50 years, producing substantive changes in the geopolitical map of the world. Those changes represent new realities to which multilateral bodies must adapt, including the Security Council. If this is not done, as the majority of Members are calling for, it would mean that we wish to perpetuate a situation that the majority of Members of our Organization reject because of its anachronistic and antidemocratic nature.

In this context, we wish to reaffirm that it is only through the reform and democratization of the Security Council that we will be able to eliminate the current imbalances. We therefore join in the just call made by the majority for an increase in the both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council, with new members having the same rights as the existing members in both categories and in sufficient numbers so as to represent all the Member States of the Organization, including developing countries in both categories, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

I should like to emphasize that my delegation attaches great importance to enhancing the working methods, transparency and functioning of the Council — including, certainly, the decision-making process and, in particular, the right of the veto — in order to achieve greater openness, transparency and democratization in the body. With regard to the privilege of the veto, we would once again like to state that we are in favour of its abolition. However, until there is general agreement on this, its use should be limited to actions under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Taking into account the political and financial situation and the crisis in trust and credibility that is hanging over the Organization — in particular with regard to the competence of the Security Council — it is our belief that inflexible and antagonistic positions with regard to the reform of the Council only serve to weaken, discredit and increase the lack of trust in the system of collective security. We believe we must urgently and immediately overcome differences and make mutual concessions that allow us to achieve a general, equitable and just agreement so that the reform can respond to the legitimate aspirations and interests of each and every member of the international community. If this is not possible, if the differences are truly irreconcilable and individual or group interests are greater than the general interests — a tendency that has been reaffirmed in this debate — it would be a good idea to find new methods and mechanisms so that we could truly and pragmatically make progress in the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing its appreciation to the President and his predecessor, as well as to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for their work aimed at reforming that main organ of the United Nations, which is charged with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Reform of the Security Council is a *sine qua non* condition for the success of the reform of the United Nations system in general. It is also important for making the Council more democratic and reflective of post-cold-war realities, rather than post-Second World War realities. The fact that more than 80 States are participating in this debate, despite the Assembly's consideration of the report of the Security Council earlier in the session, demonstrates the importance that Member States attach to this question.

The delegation of Mongolia has on many occasions expressed its views on this issue. We believe that enhancing the effectiveness and reinforcing the legitimacy of the Security Council are important if the Council is to successfully discharge its Charter obligations and cope with the challenges of the coming century. Any erosion of the authority of the Council — be it by taking decisions outside the Council that are within its competence, by misuse or abuse of the veto power, or otherwise — would only marginalize it.

There is a growing perception among some Members that the Council tends to apply double standards when it comes to some regional problems or specific cases. The debate on the question of humanitarian intervention, held earlier during this session in plenary meeting and elsewhere, is the reflection of such a perception. Mongolia, like other small countries, is vitally interested in the success of the Council's reform.

For six years in a row, the General Assembly and its Working Group have been debating the Council's

reform. Many constructive proposals have been put forward to make the Council more democratic, representative, effective, transparent and accountable. In taking stock of the progress made so far, we could say that some concrete improvements in the working methods and transparency of the Council have been registered. Many previous speakers have already made reference to this; therefore I shall not repeat them.

However, unfortunately, progress has eluded us on the substantive cluster 1 issues, which directly affect the vital interests of Member States and of the international community as a whole. Such questions include the membership of the Council and the use of the veto power. Lack of progress on these issues is leading to the emergence of the so-called fatigue syndrome, under whose effect one questions the utility of continuing the work of the Open-ended Working Group. My delegation believes that lack of progress on cluster 1 issues should not discourage us; to the contrary.

We also believe that, marginal though it may seem, some progress has been registered in cluster 1 issues. Thus, during its last session the General Assembly reconfirmed that any decision on the reform of the Council would require a two-thirds majority of the members of the General Assembly.

This year, the Working Group has reached an understanding that the questions of the increase in the membership of the Security Council and the use of veto should be addressed simultaneously. We express the hope that the next session of the Working Group will duly address the question of the veto as well as the question of the necessity of future periodic reviews of the Council's composition and performance.

Mongolia believes that the veto should ultimately be abolished and that as a first step it should be curbed and restricted to Chapter VII of the Charter. In this respect my delegation would like to reiterate its support for the proposal to require a State that has vetoed a draft resolution to explain to the General Assembly its reasons for doing so. This, I believe, would be a step towards increasing the Council's accountability to the general membership.

With respect to the question of expansion of the membership of the Council, we believe that there is an agreement in principle to expand it so as to reflect the objective changes in international relations since 1945, including the realities of power and the democratization of international relations. Therefore Mongolia believes that expansion should take place in both categories, non-permanent and permanent. In this respect we reiterate our support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, as reflected in the Durban document. We also believe that the expansion should ensure that small States, which constitute the vast majority of the membership, are duly represented and their interests reflected.

In the framework of the efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council, my delegation supports and encourages the holding of periodic open debates on crucial international issues related to different aspects of prevention or to the strengthening of international peace and security. This would allow the Council to take into consideration the views of Member States on these issues. The views of the representatives of small States could be important and practically useful, since most of the items on the Council's agenda deal, in one way or another, with questions related to small States.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to emphasize once again that, in its view, what is really needed at this stage is political will on the part of States to make the Council truly representative and more effective and efficient. My delegation is prepared to work with you, Mr. President, and with the Bureau and Member States in reforming this vital body of the United Nations to better serve the membership and the world in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wish to begin by thanking you, on behalf of the African Group, for the welcome initiative you have taken in convening this meeting, which gives us the opportunity to review this question before next year's meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform.

This is an important exercise, all the more so since it is aimed at preparing the ground for the Millennium Summit, whose overall theme is, as we all know, "The United Nations in the twenty-first century".

I wish also to join previous speakers in expressing our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Didier Opertti of Uruguay, President of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly and Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. I wish to extend this appreciation to his Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of Sri Lanka, for their commendable efforts. We

are certain that we will be able to rely on their valuable contributions when the Working Group resumes its activities.

Mr. President, your outstanding diplomatic skills are invaluable to the work of the Working Group. The African Group will continue to participate actively and constructively in the discussions of the Working Group and will support you fully in the discharge of your mandate.

I wish to share with the Assembly once again the well-known concerns of the African Group about the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. This is a question that is of particular importance to Member States. The impressive number of speakers taking part in this debate attests to this fact.

In the context of the consideration of agenda item 38, we have before us, in document A/53/47, the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Related Matters. The report covers the six substantive meetings that were held during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

The most important things have been said on this issue, and the proposals of Member States submitted to, and discussed in, the Working Group appear to converge. These attest, as they have done since our Group's work began, to the fact that a general agreement seems to be emerging regarding the need to increase the number of both permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, and this in order to guarantee equitable geographical representation.

Moreover, the vast majority of Member States support the principle of restricting the use of the veto or even its eventual elimination. The current debate has made this clear.

This convergence of views should not, however, obscure the fact that clear-cut positions remain regarding the size and composition of the expanded Security Council, the allocation of the five new permanent seats and the decision-making process, including the use of the veto.

I would not like to give the impression that the question of the reform of the Security Council can be reduced merely to the issues of expansion and the use of the veto. We also attach great importance to improving the working methods of the Council and to transparency in its work.

With regard to the question of the expansion of the Security Council, including the decision-making process and the exercise of the right of veto, I should like first of all to recall a fact that we often forget, which relates to Article 24 of the Charter. Under that Article, Member States confer upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and they recognize that in carrying out its duties entailed in that responsibility, the Council acts on their behalf, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. I repeat: the Member States have conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for peacekeeping and security. The word "conferred" is important.

What does that mean? It means that the members of the Security Council are, quite simply, the representatives of the States Members of the United Nations, and as such they should all, individually and collectively, act in a manner that is responsible to and in keeping with their duties, and in the common interest.

Today, we must point out that the decisions of the Security Council are suffering increasingly from a dual crisis — a crisis of legality and of credibility. Indeed, it seems increasingly as though the Security Council, with its current composition, is no longer representative of today's international society. Indeed, the composition of the Security Council reflects only an outdated international reality. The number of States Members of the United Nations has grown considerably since 1945. We made that clear last year, during the 66th plenary meeting, on 23 November 1998.

International geopolitical reality has also qualitatively evolved. International society has undergone profound restructuring, and who today would challenge the fact that new regions and new States had an impact views on the geopolitical and strategic realities of the world? For all those reasons, now more than ever before, the Security Council must, be reformed, not only so that it can reflect the new realities of international society, but also so that it can meet the challenges of the next millennium, with the support of the international community as a whole.

Fully aware of those realities, the heads of State of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted the African position, known as the Harare Declaration. That

Declaration was published as an official document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly in document A/52/465. We remain faithful to that position of the heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity, just as we remain faithful to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as expressed at the Durban Summit in 1998. On the basis of both, the African Group reaffirms its commitment to increasing the number of members of the Security Council to a total of 26, including both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Within that configuration, the number of members of the Council would be increased from the current number of 15 to 26, with the number of permanent members increasing from 5 to 10 and the number of non-permanent members from 10 to 16.

Within an expanded Security Council, the African Group, which has the largest number of States Members of the Organization, should be granted five non-permanent seats and at least two of the five new permanent seats, which would rotate according to a system to be decided upon by the Organization of African Unity.

Such a moderate expansion in the membership of the Security Council, based upon the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographic representation of all the regions of the world, would by no means alter the efficacy of the Council, as we have had occasion to say in the past from this very rostrum. On the contrary, the Security Council would see the legitimacy of its actions grow, and it would receive the support of all the members of the international community, which would acknowledge one another as members and as participants in the decision-making process.

However, if it is not possible to reach agreement on the increase in the number of permanent members, we agree with other non-aligned countries that an expansion could take place in a way that appears to be easier: at the level of non-permanent members only.

With regard to the question of the right of veto, the African countries believe that it goes hand in hand with the question of Security Council expansion. We firmly believe in the abolition of the anachronistic right of veto, even if at present the permanent members, which enjoy that right, find it difficult to imagine it being altered in any way. That is why the heads of State or Government of the OAU have requested that the new permanent members should enjoy the same prerogatives and powers as the present ones.

Nonetheless, the use of the right of veto should be gradually limited so that it comes to apply only to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter and no longer applies to procedural decisions taken on issues listed in the annex to resolution 267 (III), adopted by the General Assembly on 14 April 1949. Again, we say that the use of the right of veto should be gradually limited until it is done away with.

As regards the working methods of the Security Council and the transparency of its work, we welcome the progress made during the fifty-third session, which is rightly highlighted in the report of the Working Group.

In this regard, it is satisfying to note that, thanks certainly to all the discussions held within the Working Group on this issue, the working methods of the Security Council have been greatly improved these last few years. Today the States that are not members of the Council are better informed about its deliberations than they used to be. Some measures designed to increase the Council's transparency and improve its working methods have already been adopted. This is an appreciable step forward.

The Security Council should consider more fully the opinions of all United Nations Member States that wish to state their positions on the issues under debate in the Council. In this regard, I am thinking in particular that — especially for periodic reviews of sanctions regimes — from the preparatory stage onward, consultations should involve non-permanent Council members, regional groups and concerned regional organizations. We believe that the experiment of interactive dialogue, which was tried 15 December 1999 in the Council Chamber, is worth repeating.

Further, it is also regrettable that Article 44 of the Charter, concerning participation in Council decisions by States that supply contingents to peacekeeping operations, is not rigorously applied.

In addition, we think that the Council should plan to distribute more widely information about its programme of work, its emergency meetings, its public or private formal meetings, and its informal consultations.

Without a doubt, such measures, designed to increase the transparency of the Security Council's work and improve its working methods, fully deserve to be institutionalized, and the Council's rules of procedure,

which are still provisional, could be amended accordingly.

The task that is awaiting the President of the General Assembly and the rest of us is not an easy one. We have complete confidence in the President's capacity to narrow the persistent gap between the different positions on the basic questions. This will require us to show great boldness, to break away from our old habits and resolutely embrace the future.

Let me express the wish that, in the interest of all and of the United Nations, all of us, without exception, will show the willingness to compromise so that a general agreement can be reached. This is what the peoples of the United Nations are expecting of us.

Resolution 53/30, on the reform of the Security Council, is an example of what can be achieved, when there is the political will, when there is a sincere will to understand one another and, in a spirit of compromise, to make concessions.

Mr. Slade (Samoa): Like others, my delegation is grateful to the President for this further opportunity to express views on measures for the reform of the Security Council. That so many States have taken part in this debate points clearly to the central place of this issue in the work and the affairs of the Organization. It is a clear indication also, we believe, of the seriousness of the concern of Member States about the results achieved thus far, notwithstanding the time taken by the Open-ended Working Group, and the worrying implications of that situation in terms of the resolve and the commitment to find early and consensus solutions.

Our perspective is that of a small State. The great majority of the United Nations membership is made up of small States. We would readily admit that there is a range of complexities involved. At the same time, we cannot see how we, the world community, can expect to have an effective United Nations functioning in the new millennium era in accordance with Charter principles without a reformed and a modernized Security Council.

Amidst the complexities, a number of anomalies stand out. The composition of the Council does not accurately or fairly reflect the present-day membership of the Organization. Developing countries especially — and some industrialized countries as well — are not properly represented. Many speakers in this debate have remarked on the lack of equality and fairness in the current arrangements, as, indeed, many have done during the sessions of the Open-ended Working Group.

As well, a number of delegations have pointed to the lack of equitable geographical representation for particular countries and regions. In this respect, the need for a review of regional groupings and fairer representation of sub-groupings has been raised. My own delegation referred to this problem in the General Assembly's general debate in September, and we would here register again our concerns. Furthermore, I have been asked by a group of Pacific Forum States to say that they wish to be associated with our remarks regarding the need for a review of regional groupings.

May I say that we agree with the President of the General Assembly that, at this stage of our work, we should perhaps concentrate on areas more likely to produce agreement. My delegation can pledge itself to this effect because we share the concern to put right the existing inadequacies by consensus and in a timely manner. But we can see that substantive changes would be required, in part because the current structure of the Council does not reflect the facts and the realities of today. For the Security Council to act on behalf of Member States, it seems self-evident that it should be properly representative of the world community — the world community of the present time, not that of a past era. Moreover, a properly representative and democratic Council can only enhance legitimacy and effectiveness.

There seems to be broad agreement that membership of the Security Council, permanent as well as non-permanent, should be enlarged. The question of numbers, we know, remains a particular sticking point. Whatever the eventual solution, we do not believe it can be done piecemeal or as a partial one, for it would not be desirable to seek to resolve the unfairness of representation in one category without attention to the other.

Samoa should acknowledge the several and important changes made to some of the procedures and working methods of the Council in the past six years. We believe they have been of significant benefit to both Council and non-Council members, not least in the transparency of proceedings and the sense of mutuality and confidence likely to be developed as a result.

Undoubtedly, there is room for taking such measures further and we would encourage more changes. Our view is that Security Council reforms should be as

comprehensive as possible and must address all aspects as a whole, including the veto power. The veto is a central issue. It needs to be resolved in the context of current reforms. We think there is a demonstrated case for the veto power to be curtailed and to be restricted to a narrow range of issues. Our own assessment of the debate is that there is wide support for this.

We believe that appreciable time has been allowed for this admittedly difficult and critical process. The issues are now clear and, in our view, have been substantially clear for some time. Our concern is that points of argument are now being repeated or being repackaged. It is the right moment, we think, to consider moving on to a more definitive phase in the current efforts to reform the Security Council.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): May I join in the expressions of appreciation and gratitude made in this Hall to the former Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, Mr. Didier Opertti, in his capacity as President of the General Assembly, and to his Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, for their constructive contributions in initiating and guiding the process of discussion on reform.

Today, we are discussing one of the most complex and serious issues on the Organization's agenda. As we see it, if the mechanisms of the United Nations are to be more effective, several of its organs must be restructured in every aspect, the Security Council in particular. There is no doubt that Security Council reform is a necessary factor in the evolution of the entire United Nations system.

The Republic of Uzbekistan considers reform of the Security Council to be a necessary and urgent process. Any delay in this process and the absence of consensus on the distinct aspects of reform would not, we feel, further the essential timely adaptation of the United Nations to the realities of the coming millennium.

We welcome the proposals and recommendations on the basis of which the report of the Working Group was prepared, as contained in document A/53/47. The delegation of Uzbekistan notes with satisfaction the progress made by delegations in the consideration of a number of cluster II issues. Another positive element to be noted is the increase in the number of countries expressing substantive views on the basic issues of cluster I.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has frequently stated its position on an increase in the permanent memberships of the Security Council. In this connection, we support the candidacies of Germany and Japan. We feel that those States have the right to be represented as permanent members of the Council and to assume their full responsibilities before the world community. In our view, such a composition of the Security Council would strengthen its authority and the effectiveness with which it meets its increasing obligations.

The delegation of Uzbekistan feels it necessary for regions to retain the right to determine their own mechanisms and procedures for advancing candidates. The decision on the selection of new permanent members should be made by the General Assembly, in compliance with the provisions of Article 108 of the Charter. We also support an increase in the number of non-permanent memberships, optimally by two to four new seats. Our delegation feels that the total membership of the Security Council should not exceed 21 members.

On the question of granting new members the powers currently mandated to permanent members by the Charter, we call for careful consideration of the entire package of reform measures for the Security Council.

The current practice of selecting non-permanent members should be maintained, in compliance with Article 23 of the Charter. In our view, it is the best way of adhering to the principle of equitable geographic representation for all new non-permanent members.

Uzbekistan believes that the Open-ended Working Group is the most acceptable mechanism for the implementation of efforts to reform the Security Council on the basis of General Assembly resolution 48/26. We feel that the Group should pursue its search for consensus on the entire range of issues, including questions relating to the context and procedure for expanding the Security Council's membership.

The decision-making process will not be fast or easy, but we believe that the ideas for reform must not obstruct the Council's effective role in maintaining peace and security. In this context, Uzbekistan will continue to support the process of Council reform, keeping in mind the changing world situation over the past decade.

We feel that the proposal of the Secretary-General to convene the Millennium Assembly and Summit this year should be fully implemented. In our view, the year

2000 is a unique and symbolic moment for the assertion of the United Nations position and for strengthening its role in resolving the problems of the twenty-first century. Given the rapid changes occurring throughout the world, we must enter the twenty-first century with a new view of peace and security issues. We must be fully ready to meet the new challenges of the coming millennium. The achievement of tangible results in the process of renewing the Organization should be a clear and concrete contribution by its Member States to the work of confronting the realities of the new era.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to extend my thanks to the representatives of Sri Lanka and Sweden for their praiseworthy efforts. We wish them every success.

Six years have passed since the General Assembly decided to establish the high-level Open-ended Working Group to examine all aspects of Security Council reform. Unfortunately, that reform is still a mirage. All of us should prepare our international Organization — and its principal body in particular — to meet the challenges confronting mankind at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

The Working Group has met and concluded its work in the course of the last few years without concrete results. Nothing has been done with regard to the issue of increasing the membership of the Security Council which is one aspect of the desired reform, nor with regard to the composition of the permanent and non-permanent categories. This is in spite of the fact that there are now 188 Member States, thereby making the Security Council less representative and inadequate for reflecting the voices of the majority.

Moreover, the working methods of the Council have for the last 50 years been non-transparent and undemocratic. Decisions that determine the futures of countries are taken without the Member countries involved having their views heard.

Another question to which certain permanent members attach importance is the issue of the right of veto. This right is an antiquated paradox that was dictated by the circumstances of the Second World War. The fact that the major Powers were victors in that war has enabled them to impose their will under the United Nations Charter. Other Member States accepted this bitter reality because the major Powers made the threat that the United Nations would not be established if the right of veto was not accepted.

This has made the Security Council a paralysed organ in which international peace and security cannot prevail. The incident at the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum is a case in point. That factory, which produced pharmaceuticals for human and veterinary uses, was attacked by the United States of America. As a result of that attack, my country submitted a request to the Security Council for only a fact-finding mission to be sent to my country, and we emphasized that it was to be a fact-finding mission only so as to counter the claims being made by the United States. What did the Security Council do to protect international peace and security? It did nothing. The Council did not take into account Sudan's point of view simply because of the United States hegemony over the Council.

The fact is that we are living under the logic of power and not under the power of logic. Despite our belief that the United Nations is the best — and in fact the only — body to coordinate the efforts of the international community to make development possible and to meet the challenges it confronts in all areas, we believe that there exist shortcomings in the United Nations, particularly in the working methods of the Security Council, that require immediate reform.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to express its full support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represents 80 per cent of the membership of the United Nations. That position favours enlarging the Council to make it more representative and reflective of the universal character of the Organization. To this end, the membership of the Council should increase at least to 26, on the basis of the principles of equitable geographic representation and the equal sovereignty of States. Negotiations in the Council should be democratic and transparent. As far as the right to the veto is concerned, its use must be restricted only to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter until such a time as it is completely eliminated.

My delegation would also like to express its support for the African position reflected in the Declaration of the Harare summit, which called for the addition of two non-permanent seats and two permanent seats for African countries if agreement could be reached on this principle. Those seats would be rotated among African States according to criteria set out by the African States.

Another issue we consider important has to do with the tendency of the Bureau of the Working Group to resort to informal consultations. In this regard, we believe that informal consultations should not be used unless there is a small number of problems that require a convergence of points of view. Other than that, informal consultations should not be used in the Working Group. Moreover, informal consultations give rise to doubts; and it is for this reason that my delegation wishes to continue to examine all aspects of the Security Council's reform transparently in working groups to determine what countries want with regard to questions related to both clusters.

Finally, I wish to say that the negotiation methods used in dealing with Security Council reform should aim at greater democracy, transparency and equity. That is why believe that the Working Group should remain a high-level group and should be the sole official forum of the General Assembly to examine the question of reforming the Council.

Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus): Since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Security Council, in 1993, its yearly reports have, for five consecutive years, been submitted, considered and adopted by the General Assembly. Yet even though there is agreement on the objective of reforming and increasing the Council's membership, a clearly acceptable and ratifiable proposal for enlargement still eludes us.

During past general debates, the delegation of Cyprus has, at the highest level, placed on record its views on this all-important issue. We support expanding the Council through an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution of seats through which the present imbalanced situation between developed and developing countries would be addressed.

The criteria used in allocating permanent-seat status should be a considerable contribution to the budget, to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other goals of the United Nations, as in the case of India, in our own Asian regional group. We feel that the enlargement is necessary in view of the increase in the membership of the United Nations. We also feel that such an increase will render it more participative and, of course, more representative. Its decisions will be more credible and authoritative, as they will represent all of the Member States on whose behalf it is mandated by the United Nations Charter to act.

We are on the threshold of a new millennium. The Security Council, as a guarantor of peace and security, must be prepared to address the vast challenges ahead. Expanding it and improving further its working methods would have beneficial effects, while any attempt to exclude certain countries from any stratum of Council membership would weaken its credibility and support for its actions.

What is needed for the enlargement of the Council is political will and flexibility, so that we can reach an overwhelmingly supported decision. There is already a general realization that reform of the Security Council is inevitable. We hope, therefore, that by expanding the areas of concurrence reached at previous sessions of the Open-ended Working Group, we will take positive steps forward towards a general agreement.

Reform of the Security Council is not only a matter of composition and size but entails also a review of its working methods, so as to provide even more transparency and greater accountability to the general membership of the United Nations. The greater its accountability, the stronger the Security Council. We must welcome here the progress made in the Council's working methods, especially in the area of transparency. For example, we view as positive developments the summing up by the outgoing Presidents, the briefings at the end of meetings by the President of the Council and the providing of background information in its report to the General Assembly. There is no doubt that greater transparency is needed with respect to consultations in the Council's caucus meetings. There is also a need to provide information on the views of the non-members of the Security Council that are participating in its debates on items of concern to them, and to assess the extent to which those views influence, or fail to influence, the decision-making process.

We support the Indian proposal on the incorporation in the annual report of an assessment by the Council of the usefulness and helpfulness of its own actions, and we are willing to discuss and consider the proposal of Germany to report to the General Assembly the reasons for the use of the veto.

While we understand the usefulness and positive effects of informal consultations, we feel that they should be used sparingly, not routinely as they are today. The Council must do more to increase the participation of non-members of the Council in its deliberations. Closed meetings frustrate such participation. In this regard, we

favour the recent practice of holding more frequent consultation meetings of the Security Council that are open to the general membership.

The Council's close cooperation with the General Assembly is of the utmost importance and needs further elaboration.

Mr. Muchetwa (Zimbabwe): It has been stated on several occasions that any reform of the United Nations system will be meaningless if the Security Council remains untouched. For Africa, these words are not far from the truth. It had been the hope of this delegation that, by the end of this millennium, substantive progress would have been registered that would have enabled us to enter the next millennium with a reformed Council, reflective of the size of the United Nations and of the aspirations of its members.

While it is true that in 1945 most colonial States — a large number of them in Africa — had their interests looked after by the colonizing States, the situation is no longer the same today. Most of those colonial States are now independent and Members of the United Nations. It is therefore quite apparent that representation in the Security Council should reflect this new dispensation.

My delegation supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that in reforming the Security Council the veto must be curtailed. We are aware that it is not easy to try to reduce a special privilege when the concurrence of those that enjoy the privilege is required. However, we believe that, if those wielding the power of veto in the Security Council are unwilling to have the veto curtailed, the new permanent members in the Security Council must enjoy the same prerogatives as those exercised by the current permanent members.

In that connection, we would like to reiterate what was stated at the 1997 Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit on the question of the Security Council. Africa expects two permanent seats, whose occupancy will be decided by the Africans themselves on a rotational basis, and three non-permanent seats. This, we believe, is a reasonable demand, for in 1945, when the United Nations was formed, five permanent seats were created out of a total membership of about 50. Today, however, there are 53 African States, which were not accommodated when the United Nations was being set up.

We have noted in the debates of the Security Council, including the open interactive debate conducted last week, that no one in the permanent category fully represents Africa's interests. Some Security Council members themselves admit to this. We have often noticed African issues being taken lightly and have seen African issues being debated at times for public consumption. We feel that Africa will better represent Africa's interests in the Council.

Africa therefore needs a quick reform of the Security Council, to which it will contribute meaningfully, because at least 50 per cent of the Security Council's agenda items pertain to situations in Africa.

A major area of concern to my delegation is the frequent use of informal consultations in the Security Council. While we recognize that informal consultations may be necessary in certain cases, it is our submission that these should be the exception rather than the rule. Open debates should instead become the order of the day, as the operations of the Security Council must be above board. To act otherwise is to act contrary to the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Is it not ironic that some members of the Security Council frequently call upon the developing nations to be democratic in their respective polities, while the same members are themselves doing the opposite in the Security Council? Members of the Security Council must lead by example, by practising what they preach. We have no doubt that Africa will participate at the permanent level with the same seriousness of purpose as the others are doing at present.

My delegation pledges itself to engage in meaningful discussions, and we hope that our colleagues will reciprocate so that we can all live up to the expectations of the international community by quickly reforming the Security Council.

Mr. Pappalardo (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should first like to point out the great importance that my country attaches to this debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. The delegation of Paraguay has participated actively over the years in the Open-ended Working Group, and there and in plenary meetings we have stated our position with regard to the reform of the Security Council.

It is important to emphasize that the Secretary-General's proposed reform of the United Nations will not be complete if the Security Council is not reformed. In

1945, the United Nations was composed of 51 Member States; today, this prestigious Organization has 188 Member States, and the many changes that have taken place in the world require the Organization to adopt itself better to current realities.

In this span of years, walls, structures and philosophies of life have crumbled and States have disintegrated. We have seen the end of the cold war, the end of a particular period of history, and as a result we looked to the future with greater optimism. Such optimism must accompany the work of the Open-ended Working Group and, even though, as one delegate has said, there have been ups and downs in the progress of that work, the delegation of Paraguay will devote special attention to this issue. We assure the President of the General Assembly, as well as the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, that we will cooperate effectively so that we can make progress in the immediate future on this important issue of Security Council reform.

This year, the international community has witnessed requests for concrete action by the Security Council. This is a reflection of the fact that when there is a crisis, the world looks to the Security Council because it is the body responsible for maintaining international peace and security. The military attack by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was conducted contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

The central reform issue is the question of the expansion of or, more precisely, equitable representation on and increase in the membership of, the Security Council. Equitable representation will be achieved only by an increase in the number of both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. As I said at the beginning of my statement, the number of Members of this Organization has increased more than threefold since 1945, in particular as a result of the admission to the Organization of many developing countries.

More than 30 years have passed since the number of members of the Council was increased from 11 to the present 15. The developing countries are severely under-represented in the Council. The question of an increase in the number of both categories is of real importance. We believe that the new permanent membership should include at least two industrialized countries that have established themselves as major contributors to this Organization and that have participated in the building of the present-day world.

The delegation of Paraguay appeals strongly for a seat for the Latin American and Caribbean region among the new permanent members, as well as for the other regions of the developing world, such as Africa and Asia. If we wish to guarantee the representativeness and the legitimacy of the Council, such countries must be included in the increase; the expanded Council would thus be strengthened and achieve equitable representation.

The delegation of Paraguay believes that the formula put forward by Ambassador Razali with regard to the enlargement of the Security Council was a good one; it would lead to an equitable geographical increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members and allow for greater participation by the various regions of the world. However, since that formula was put forward, not only has time passed, but new formulas for adding new members have been introduced, incorporating other elements that are very important and require serious and in-depth analysis by the Member States of this Organization.

The adoption by consensus of resolution 53/30 on 23 November 1998 was a substantive step towards reaching general agreements on the reform of the Council. It provides further proof that, with realism, flexibility and political will we can make progress. The debates that take place next year will have to be aimed at bringing positions closer together and at avoiding confrontation as much as possible.

In conclusion, with regard to the question of the veto, Paraguay believes that, given the current historical circumstances, which are very different from those that prevailed when the Security Council was established, the right of veto, which is a true privilege for a few, should be confined exclusively to the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter. However, we must seek a formula that will limit the range of its utilization until it can be eliminated completely.

Mr. Vural (Turkey): The sheer number of speakers addressing the issue of Security Council reform — perhaps more than have ever spoken in any other debate — testifies clearly to the importance that the membership attaches to this vital question. We are all united, I hope, in the belief that the Council must represent the world of today and tomorrow, not the world of 1945.

Twenty years after this issue was raised, and six years after the Working Group was established, we are still in search of answers to this challenge. When drawing

up a balance sheet on the reform process we cannot omit the fact that tangible progress has been achieved on the cluster II issues. The working practices and transparency of the Council have improved somewhat. Although modest in nature, these steps were not given but were achieved through the persistent work of reform-minded Members, both within and outside the Council. These improvements are the kind of progress that the general membership would like to see.

On the core issue of expansion of and equitable representation on the Council, however, let us be frank and recognize that fundamental differences still persist. At this stage of the debate perhaps it would be appropriate to ask ourselves why we have failed to come to any agreement. Are we addressing the right issues or asking the right questions? Are we seeking to satisfy incompatible demands and conflicting needs through a single reform package? Perhaps we should pause and reflect upon what we intend to do and how to accomplish it.

I think that we all agree that the need for the expansion and reform of the Council is real. The discrepancy between the priorities of a limited club and the ever-increasing and changing demands of the much wider international community — of the developing world especially — is becoming more evident and acute. Every new international issue or crisis reminds us of the weakness of the institution and its practices. The Security Council cannot remain immune to the global push towards achieving more representative, democratic, transparent and accountable structures.

A patchwork solution, a partial remedy, cannot be a cure. Adding a few members, some of them on the strength of their financial contributions and some on the basis of regional recognition, cannot render the Council more democratic and representative. It cannot enhance the sense of responsibility that wider participation would provide.

There can be no structure without a coherent architecture. The concept of permanent membership, without due regard for the privileges that go with it, is an illusion. However, the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council with the current privileges can only serve to perpetuate the unfair and unjust configuration.

Turkey remains open-minded regarding the reform process. We cannot remain indifferent to the marginalization of the Security Council. However, a reform of the Council for the sake of reform is not a sound approach. We have to redefine our task. This entails broader and more equitable representation based on regional, subregional, economic and other relevant criteria, on the one hand, and the absence of a caste system within the Council, on the other hand.

As we continue this debate through the Working Group we might also reflect on the possibility of instituting a small group of wise men that could assist the Working Group in an advisory capacity, so as to inject some fresh ideas into our sterile debate. This group could be composed of eminent personalities drawn from various regions and subregions and diverse cultures. They could approach this daunting task from the perspective of the broader interests of the international community.

In conclusion, may I express our profound condolences to the Government and the people of Venezuela in the wake of the floods and landslides that have taken a heavy human toll and resulted in major material losses. We must all be united in assisting Venezuela in its recovery from this tragedy.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): I join previous speakers in thanking the President for holding this important debate concerning the question of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We hope that our discussion here will provide new momentum for progress in the Open-ended Working Group, where the subject has now been under consideration for six long years.

The Security Council is the supreme body entrusted by the international community with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and, under the Charter of the United Nations, with the power to make decisions that bind the entire United Nations membership. Under the existing structure, any one of the five permanent members, exercising its right of veto, can block the Council from acting, even in situations where action is urgently called for. This may not actually happen too often, but the fact is that the right of veto gives any of the Security Council's permanent members undue weight in the decision-making process. One can go as far as saying that under the present system one single permanent member has the right and the power to hold the Security Council — and, indeed, the whole United Nations membership — hostage, if it simply chooses to do so, for whatever reason. It also means protracted negotiations and undue delays in decision-making in the Council, until compromises — often bad ones — are

made with an unwilling member. This also underscores why Security Council decisions are so often lacking in consistency.

Under the present system of the Security Council, the elected members of the Council play only a secondary role in the decision-making process. More often than not, they simply have to wait on the sidelines while the permanent members work out compromises based on their national priorities and other considerations. This is demeaning, not only to the non-permanent members but also to the rest of us, who elect them to serve on the Security Council. We brand such a decision-making system as undemocratic and arbitrary when it is used at the national level, and we need to strongly discourage it in this world body, and especially in the Security Council, to which we have given the supreme power to act on our behalf for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The system is archaic, representing a legacy of a bygone colonial era when political as well as economic power rested with a couple of colonial Powers, while the rest of the world generally languished under colonial rule or existed as nations defeated in the Second World War. The structure and the method of operation of the Security Council reflect the realities of those days and are completely out of tune with the realities of our times.

We do not need another Seattle scenario, where civil societies mobilized to remind us that the system under which we work is unfair and must change. The necessary change must come from within. We therefore call upon the permanent members of the Security Council to sit together not only to discuss seriously with us changes to be made, but to brainstorm among themselves and propose the changes that are appropriate so that the Security Council can become a really democratic and credible organ deserving of the total confidence of all mankind in the fulfilment of its important responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

The position of Mauritius on the representativeness and expansion of the Security Council is the known position of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity. Africa has been denied its rightful representation in the Security Council for far too long, both in the permanent and non-permanent categories. In our view, India — as the second most populous country, with more than a billion people, as the largest democracy in the world and as an industrial and economic powerhouse — more than deserves its own seat in the Security Council in the permanent category.

It is also our firm belief that expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories should happen as one package, and not piecemeal. Expansion in both categories must take into account proper and equitable geographic representation.

We appreciate the fact that from time to time the presidency of the Security Council holds open discussions on important issues. We believe that the right moment to hold such open discussions is before resolutions are adopted by the Council on important issues, rather than afterwards. Such a practice would enable the Security Council to take informed decisions after it has heard as many non-members of the Council as possible express their views. Furthermore, the Council should reach out to regional and subregional organizations and seek their opinions as well on issues of concern to them. This means that the Security Council should desist from acting as the kitchen cabinet of a select few in formulating decisions that have important bearing on the people concerned, and on all of us.

Transparency enhances credibility; and in a world body, at the United Nations, that should be the benchmark at all levels, and especially in the Security Council.

Mr. Leao Monteiro (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): The President of the General Assembly has made possible this current round of general comments from Member States before we resume our discussions on the question of Security Council reform next year. This allows us to take stock of our willingness to deal with the problem, and we hope that it will provide him with useful information for guiding us in our work.

I would first like to note that we do not believe that our Working Group has wasted time in repeating itself in recent years. In our view, given that such an important and complex issue cannot be resolved quickly, it only appears that we are running in place, as some have said. In fact, we have made changes and refinements and have fleshed out our positions, thereby making it possible today for us to begin to discern the possibilities among which we will have to have the courage to choose.

At the same time, resolution 53/30 has forced us to take up the question in all its aspects and to seek a comprehensive solution. It does not seem possible for us to bring together the components of such a solution without all of us moving beyond the narrow pursuit of

our national ambitions, because, quite simply, those ambitions cannot be compatible. Certain parties' fear of seeing their control over decisions diminished throughout the world, and others' fear of losing the chance to gain that privileged control, is a major obstacle to overcome.

Furthermore, the persistent desire to deny a more open administration of international life is fed by the potential insecurity that the growth of certain contemporary threats presents. The concern over those threats is justified. A major question is therefore whether those threats will continue to be confronted essentially by those holding exceptional power or by the will and joint action of all those concerned. We are convinced that the latter path has every advantage. It would certainly be more legitimate and more respectful of the status of all the Members of the United Nations, and would also be more powerful and effective. Of course, this is not a question of reducing the strength, capacity or resources of those who possess them, but rather of adding to them the strengths, capacities and resources of others to create a truly international framework.

We have for a long time lived in an environment that tends to dismiss as naive any solutions that are not guaranteed by the power of those who promote them. Most States thus find themselves excluded from participation because they do not have a share of responsibility. We should therefore not evaluate the viability and efficiency of a more open and participatory system of collective security on the basis of the current routine behaviour of those that cannot have their say, because a change in those responsibilities is precisely what they need in order to enhance their efforts and knowledge to a level commensurate with their degree of participation in international action.

The large and the small, the powerful and the less powerful, will not cease to be what they are when they put their necessarily different efforts into a collective and pluralistic framework. On the other hand, the largest and most powerful stand to gain genuine respect and general appreciation. This openness and sharing have to do not only with the expansion of the membership of the Council, but also with powers, duties, decision-making processes and working methods in the Council. There is no reason for contradiction in any of these areas between the objectives of efficiency, transparency and democratization. This is simply a challenge to be honourably met and overcome with confidence. If we allow ourselves to be guided by this spirit, the road leading to the components of a global solution will become more apparent and everyone — especially, in some cases, those most directly involved — will be able to work more methodically towards that solution.

Mr. President, at this stage and in this preliminary segment, this is what my delegation thought was most relevant. It will participate in the discussions that you will organize in the near future on the different aspects of the topic we are dealing with. We are certain that you will do so in the open and transparent manner to which we have become accustomed in the General Assembly.

With regard to relaunching the work, like other speakers we would like to refer to the suggestion that you develop the use of the questionnaire produced by your predecessor. We believe that it would be interesting and useful for the various positions on different aspects of this issue to be presented in a structured way and made known to all. The value and the scope of this instrument will, however, depend on the content of the questionnaire. That content has been constructively criticized, and it is necessary, we think, to make the questionnaire more complete so that it can offer the necessary range of answers and clarifications. This would probably result in a greater volume of responses than the one that has been used to date.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): Today we speak of a goal that everyone can understand: a more equitable and representative Security Council. I wish to emphasize that the State of Israel fully supports this aim. We too share the vision of a Security Council that is more equitable and transparent in its work and accountability and more representative of Member States.

However, any talk of this purpose is incomplete when it omits the most glaring case of inequity and lack of representation that tarnishes this Organization today. I refer to the fact that my country is still denied membership in a regional group. This obstacle prevents Israel alone from being able to be elected to the main organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. We alone, therefore, are denied the right to be an equal Member in the work of the United Nations.

Article 2 of the Charter stipulates that:

> "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members."

The fact that Israel cannot join any regional group stands in direct contradiction to this principle.

In a recent judicial opinion put out by Justice Sir Robert Jennings, who served as Judge and President of the International Court of Justice from 1991 to 1994, it is noted that the exclusion of Israel is a form of discrimination placing the Member States and the United Nations in violation of their legal obligations and of the Charter. Justice Jennings writes:

> "Such discrimination prevents Israel from enjoying the full benefits of its membership and places the United Nations in breach of the Charter".

In particular, Justice Jennings states:

> "Israel's exclusion from the regional group system places the United Nations in breach of its fundamental obligations regarding sovereign equality and is thus illegal".

Moreover, the Member States themselves are likewise bound by these fundamental obligations. As Justice Jennings states,

> "It is evident too that Members are under an obligation to remedy the present situation."

Today it simply cannot be said that the United Nations Charter is being fully upheld in practice. This undermines the integrity of the Charter and therefore of the Organization itself. For us, unfortunately, the sting of exclusion goes beyond the fact that it is illegal. My country arose out of the scattered remnants of 2,000 years of exile in which the Jewish people suffered as a displaced nation, without a voice or a home in the world community.

Our dream, the dream that gave birth to the State of Israel, was to finally rejoin the family of nations. We too would merge with the chorus of the international community as an equal voice. That basic right, a right enjoyed by every Member of this Organization, large or small, was promised in the admission of Israel in 1949 as a Member of the United Nations. Fifty years later, we have yet to enjoy it.

We have been waiting to realize our potential in the workings of the United Nations. We yearn for an opportunity to participate fully and equally in the initiatives launched here. It is not merely our right as a Member State. It is a manifestation of our deepest aspirations as a people and as a country.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently called attention to the anomaly of Israel's exclusion. He stated:

> "The exclusion of Israel from the system of regional groupings; ... these and other circumstances have given a regrettable impression of bias and one-sidedness." *(SG/SM/7260)*

The Secretary-General went on to say:

> "I had very much hoped that Member States would have reached agreement on this by now. As I have said before, we must uphold the principle of equality among Member States. I shall keep encouraging all concerned to find a solution." *(ibid.)*

No reform of the Security Council can be complete without facing this injustice. I ask that this anomaly in the United Nations system finally be addressed and rectified. As long as one Member State is denied the equal participation granted to all others, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter remain unfulfilled.

Mr. Donigi (Papua New Guinea): I am honoured to be one of the last speakers, because I can say authoritatively that past and present discussions concentrated on the reform of the Security Council point to one common agreement: there is unanimity on the need for reform. After more than 50 years, it can be expected that the Council has matured and is very experienced in all facets of peace and security. But being experienced is one thing; applying the experience to practical situations is another matter entirely.

Just last week, it was said in the media that President Jacques Chirac of France foresees a world which will be transformed from unipolar to multipolar. This will be like an electron with negative and positive influences. The greater membership of the United Nations will be very much subject to the new international geo-politics. If this is true — and I dare say that, observing from the periphery of the Pacific, what President Chirac is describing appears to be unfolding before our very eyes — then it seems imperative that we not limit ourselves to reforming the Security Council, but must seize the opportunity to review the questions of governance and law codified in the Charter of the United Nations. The timing is right and the review should not be delayed, or we will lose all momentum.

Arrangements that took into account the bipolar politics that existed in the 1950s were reflected in the Charter. If indeed the future of the world is to be multipolar power, then the whole regional grouping system within the United Nations must of necessity be reviewed as well. In this respect, when the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea addressed the Assembly in September, he stated that there is a need to reconfigure the geographical landscape of the United Nations. In such a reconfiguration, we would anticipate that each subregion must be represented on the Security Council. Alternatively, some discussion must be focused on creating opportunities for subregions to be represented. This will necessarily entail some discussion of the composition of the subregions.

On the issue of expansion, we agree that there must be an expansion in both categories. There must, however, be no second-class permanent members. The veto power must therefore be limited to certain areas of global concern. We also believe that permanent status and the right of veto must be tied to commensurate obligations, in particular contributions to international peace and security.

My delegation is prepared to be engaged in constructive discussions on each Chapter of the Charter. We are concerned, however, that general discussions on matters of principle may not result in any progress. We believe that once a document is produced, the delegations will be able to sit down and talk about the implications and to try and find a way forward. Beyond general principles, we would like to see proposals for substitute provisions of the Charter as a starting point.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): We welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate on agenda item 38, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". This is a question to which the General Assembly should accord the highest priority, touching as it does on the essence of the power relations among Members of the United Nations and on how each country's political interests should be afforded maximum protection.

At the outset, permit me to align myself with the statements made by Cameroon, on behalf of the African Group, and Namibia, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

Last Wednesday, the Security Council once again dealt with Africa in an open meeting. It was one of several such meetings in the recent past. Some of those, such as that of 29 September, were held at the ministerial level. It should not come as a surprise that this is the case, because it is well known that Africa is the main preoccupation of the Security Council due to the numerous conflicts there.

African representation in the Security Council needs to be enhanced in order to reflect the continent's interests and perceptions. Africa's position on the issue of Security Council expansion is already well known. It has been articulated by Organization of African Unity summits — first at Tunis in 1994 and subsequently at Harare, in 1997, and at Ouagadougou, in 1998. That position is that Africa should be accorded two permanent, rotating seats.

The positions of many other countries are also well known. They have been adequately articulated in the last six years of our dealing with this subject. A fresh momentum is now required to move this matter forward. Continued and unending discussions will only bring discredit to the United Nations as a talking shop. It is necessary to delineate the main points that have emerged from the last six years of discussion.

First, there is some satisfaction with the reforms that have been effected by the Security Council itself under cluster 2, such as the periodic orientation debates, periodic field operations reports, et cetera.

Secondly, everybody agrees with the need to increase the number of members of the Security Council to reflect the increase in the membership of the United Nations, since the last expansion of the Council took place in 1965.

Thirdly, a large majority is in favour of the expansion of the Security Council in both categories.

Fourthly, a large majority desires an increase in the number of seats to a number not less than 2+.

Fifthly, every country in the large majority that is in favour of expansion in both categories agrees that Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean deserve new permanent seats, including at least an additional one for Asia. There is also considerable support for honestly and seriously considering the claims of Germany and Japan to permanent seats.

Sixthly, except for the permanent five, there is unanimous agreement that, in its present form, the veto is anachronistic and therefore in need of either abolition or, at least, reform.

Clearly, our remaining tasks should be to narrow the differences and to begin to work towards a negotiated compromise. In this connection, it would be useful to continue to find ways of making progress in reforming the working methods of the Security Council, and then to take on the difficult task of narrowing the differences with regard to expansion. Here it is worth recalling that large majorities already exist in support of certain positions, but that the minorities are significant, either in their numbers or in their influence on the work of the Organization. The starting point ought to be to come to closure on the question of whether the expansion should take place only in one category or in both. There is no point in talking any more about expansion unless this basic question is resolved.

Next comes the question of what to do about the veto — assuming, of course, that the resolution of the earlier question is in the direction of the creation of new permanent seats, as the large majority would wish.

We can then deal with the other remaining questions related to expansion, such as the optimal size of the Council, the number of additional seats to be allocated to each region, et cetera.

This is the only way forward, and we strongly recommend it to the attention of the President of the General Assembly; otherwise the General Assembly will continue to go around in circles for one more year. I am sure the President does not want that to be the legacy of his presidency.

The delegation of Lesotho pledges to the President its full support in his search for a credible solution to this vexed question. During the forthcoming debates, we plan to make substantive contributions to that debate.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 38.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.